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French celebrities, as seen
by their contemporaries

FRENCH CELEBRITIES,

AS SEEN BY THEIR CONTEMPORARIES.

*A SERIES OF BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THE
FOREMOST FRENCHMEN OF OUR DAY.*

✓ by
Ernest Daudet, and others.

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FRENCH CELEBRITIES.

MARSHAL DE MACMAHON.

[MARIE EDME PATRICE MAURICE, MARSHAL DE MACMAHON, Duke of Magenta, was born at the Chateau of Sully, near Autun, June 13th, 1808, being the descendant of an Irish family which took refuge in France after the fall of the Stuarts. Indeed it is claimed that his remote ancestry included some of the early Irish kings. He entered the Military Academy of St. Cyr in 1825, and after graduating therefrom was assigned to army duty in Algeria. Returning to France during the July revolution of 1830, he was present at the siege of Antwerp. Once more transferred to Africa, he distinguished himself especially at the storming of Constantine. His promotion was rapid, attaining the rank of major in 1840, lieutenant-colonel in 1842, colonel in 1845, and general of brigade in 1848. In accordance with the latter rank he stood at the head of administration, first, of the province of Oran, and second, of that of Constantine. When, in 1855, General Canrobert left the Crimea, General de MacMahon, then in France, was selected by the Emperor to succeed the former in the command of a division; and when the chiefs of the allied armies resolved on assaulting Sebastopol, September 8th, they assigned to General de MacMahon the dangerous attack upon the works of the Malakoff. For his brilliant success on this occasion he received the grand cross of the Legion of Honor. On his return he was created a Senator of France, in which position it may, at least, be said, he exhibited great firmness and independence of character. In 1857 he fought again in Algeria, and in 1859 made his name famous in the campaign against Austria. He commanded the second corps and led the left wing of the army

at Magenta, June 4th, 1859. For gallantry on the field he was created a Marshal of France and Duke of Magenta. He also played a conspicuous part in the battle of Solferino. In 1864 he was appointed Governor-General of Algeria. At about this period he inaugurated a new political system in that country, the tendency of which was to create an Arab kingdom. It proved, however, a complete failure, and he was much criticised on account of his utterly Utopian scheme. On the outbreak of the Franco-German war, Marshal de MacMahon received the command of the first army corps. He was defeated at Wörth, was driven by the advancing Germans toward the Belgian frontier, surrounded and forced to accept battle at Sedan, September 1st, 1870. On the morning of that day he was severely wounded in the thigh, and gave up the command. The succeeding day witnessed the unconditional surrender of the Emperor and army to their victorious adversaries. It may here be stated that, while a prisoner in Germany, he was about the only superior officer who escaped the general charge of treason, preferred by his fellow-countrymen. After the conclusion of the armistice, Marshal de MacMahon was intrusted by President Thiers with the command of the army of Versailles, the only organized troops France possessed at that time. He was successful in putting down the revolution of the Commune, and showed little mercy to the more culpable originators of it on the occasion of his entering Paris. On the resignation of President Thiers (May 24th, 1873), he was chosen President of the Republic, his powers being conferred for a period of seven years. His political sympathies were with the conservatives, and at times his action was openly declared to be reactionary. Suspicions of a *coup d'état* were more than once excited during his occupancy of the Presidential office, especially in 1877, and again just prior to his final resignation in 1879. Since his withdrawal from political life Marshal de MacMahon has lived in retirement, and little has been heard of him either at home or abroad.]

BORN at the Chateau of Sully, near Autun, the 13th of June, 1808, Marshal de MacMahon, at the period of the present writing, has entered upon his seventy-fifth year. An old man, it is true, but a sturdy old man, very hale and hearty, unimpaired both in body and

mind, and inheriting all the physical and mental vigor of his ancient Irish ancestors.

It is pretended that the hardihood of the elder races is to-day exhausted—that the men of the present age represent only stunted and withered branches of the parent tree. This may be true in some instances, but it is false in many others, particularly so in the case of Maurice de MacMahon, the sixteenth of seventeen children born to the Marquis Charles-Laure de MacMahon. A veritable man of iron, it might almost be said that he drew from the antiquity of his family the inherent vigor of his race. Few careers have been more active than his. It is now almost sixty years since he entered the service of his country. Together with Pélissier, Changarnier, Lamoricière, and many others, young and gallant as himself, he was present on the 5th of July, 1830, at the taking of Algiers. At that time he was only twenty-two years of age. Since those glorious days, always at his post, always in the foremost ranks, winning his promotions at the point of his sword, he has ever been found under the flag of France, whenever and wherever it directed—in Algeria, in the Crimea, in Italy, and on the French frontier when invaded by German hosts. By turns he has known the joys of victory and the sufferings of defeat—at the taking of the Malakoff, where he uttered the never-to-be forgotten words, “*J’y suis, j’y reste !*” * at Magenta, where he was created Duke and Marshal of France ; at Reischoffen, where his glory was increased ; and at Sedan, where he narrowly escaped death at the hands of the enemy.

Neither has our great soldier been spared the cares and harassments of civil affairs. Toward the close of

* “ Here I am, here I stay.”

his public career the confidence of the country invested him with the full responsibilities of political power. He had exhausted all the emotions of the battle-field, all the vexations of colonial government, all the sorrows and heart-burnings that an overwhelming national disaster could possibly inflict on a mind sensitive as his own to the glory and grandeur of France ; yet far from being despondent or fatigued, either mentally or physically, he was never more ardent and conscientious than at that hour—as though the noble blood of his ancestors had fortified him against the mortal decay which reveals, in the decline of life, a certain infirmity of power and purpose among those whose careers have been almost too replete with great and stirring events.

It is true that, in every instance of this long and indefatigable labor, Marshal de MacMahon had in view only the accomplishment of duty, and in its constant pursuit he experienced the supreme satisfaction of conscientious actions worthily performed. This noble nature is sufficiently well explained and fully summed up in the *cult* of duty. He was always, and under all circumstances, simple, modest, unpretending, devoid of petty personal ambitions, preoccupied solely in serving his country well and guarding its honor as his own. Without doubt this accounts for the universal respect which has followed him in the diverse phases of his military career, and which has outlived the troublous days in consequence of which he abandoned power, poorer even than when he assumed it, and sought the seclusion of private life. Everything in his character is noble—even the motive for the faults he committed as Chief of the State ; and thus it is that the political resentment and hatred which he once provoked, vanished the very moment he relinquished into the hands, lawfully conferring it, the

mandate of power which he could no longer conscientiously exercise. Those whom his overthrow as President of the Republic has not detached from him, and who, as spectators of his conduct or sharers in his confidence, were best judges of the man himself, delight in saluting in his person military glory combined with good citizenship, and in rendering well-deserved homage to his purity of purpose, his abnegation, his patriotism, and thorough devotion to what he esteemed to be the right.

Were we called upon to recount the military services of Marshal de MacMahon, the few pages into which we are forced to condense this brief biography would in no wise suffice ; for such a labor would comprise the entire military history of our country during the past half-century—the conquest of Algeria, the wars in the Orient, the campaign of Kabylie, the Italian struggle, the heroic deeds of the Army of the Rhine, and the suppression of the Commune—those touching, tragical, painful souvenirs which could not be recalled without sadness, and, furthermore, without pride. Marshal de MacMahon holds an important place in all these historical events, from no one of which can his name and renown by any possibility ever become detached.

How, for example, will it be possible to speak of the storming of the Malakoff, without designating the intrepid soldier who scaled the trembling tower, seizing it by a most audacious stroke, and firmly maintaining his position amid the rain of shot and shells ? How relate the story of Magenta, without remembering that the success of that day was due to the gallant general who, by his prompt action, transformed what seemed to be an almost certain defeat into a brilliant victory ? How present the bloody epic of Reischoffen, without remembering the brave leader, grander even in misfortune

than in triumph? And how, finally, can we separate from the dramatic record of the Commune, the firmness and tenacity displayed by the generalissimo of President Thiers? What Parisian, shut up within the walls of the beleaguered, starving, blood-stained city, during those abhorrent days, did not hail with joy, on the 28th of May, 1871, amid the lingering smoke of street battles and the rattle of final fusillades, the message of deliverance, couched in these vibrating words :

“Inhabitants of Paris! The Army of France has come to save you. Paris is delivered. At four o’clock our soldiers took the last position of the insurgents. To-day the struggle is terminated. Order, labor, and security will be resumed. DE MACMAHON.”

Thus is the illustrious name of the signer associated with the most striking episodes of our contemporaneous national history. And there are yet other incidents, all too quickly forgotten by those who witnessed them, but which the future will resuscitate and present to the world in their own proper light. We will cite but one, which is sufficient for our present purpose. It occurred on the 25th of February, 1858.

After the attempted assassination of the Emperor by Orsini, the Senate was called upon to consider a measure on the *sûreté générale*, elaborated by the Council of State, and already voted in the Corps Législatif. It was one of those measures of reaction and compression, wholly inspired through fear, which is sometimes exacted by erratic and defective governments—a measure wrong both in principle and application, and in this case clearly unconstitutional. In the Corps Législatif no one dared to oppose it; but when it reached the Senate, a voice

(and only one) *was* raised against its adoption—that of General de MacMahon. It is fitting we should recall at this moment the noble words then spoken, for they are indeed worthy of a place in history; and in reading them, while remembering the rigorous régime under which France groaned at that period, one can form a better estimate of the man who has not unfrequently been belied by his political enemies of courage and independence:

“Gentlemen, I confess to a certain degree of embarrassment at finding myself called upon to oppose a law already voted by the Council of State and the Corps Législatif, and which seems certain of adoption by this body. I even acknowledge that, in order to maintain my present opposition to this measure, I have been obliged to fall back upon the moral support of the adage of our fathers—‘*Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra.*’* But, conscientiously, I believe this measure to be unconstitutional, and productive of unhappy consequences. In my opinion, the results desired to be brought about can be obtained otherwise than in direct violation of the constitution. Consequently, as an honest man who regards his solemn oath of office as sacred and binding, and as an independent legislator like yourselves, I am obliged to vote against it.”

After the foregoing preamble the speaker entered upon a discussion of the principles of 1879. He sought for in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, in the Constitution of 1789, and in the law of the 10th of August, 1790, and demonstrated that those principles did not permit the assumption of violence and proscription. In opposing the project he strikingly depicted its most dangerous features, declaring it illegal, and unworthy the dignity

* “Do right, whatever happens.”

of administrative authority and the consideration of the Senate.

“It might provoke among a certain class of individuals,” he added, “the most violent irritation. I would even say, what I should not care to express if our sittings were public instead of private, that I tremble at the temptations such an enactment might present to some malefactor, exasperated by the transportation of kindred or friends, for crimes equally deplorable as that of which we have lately taken cognizance. I believe that the opportunity for this temptation does not exist where the people are called upon simply to submit to the definitive laws of the country, and not to a tribunal, the decisions of which they have come to regard as arbitrary. This impression appears to me well worthy of your consideration. As for myself, I would in the meanwhile pass over all objections to the proposed law, if, with the undoubted majority of the Senate, I was able to persuade myself that its passage was alone necessary to insure public safety ; but I firmly believe we can arrive at the same result through conscientious functionaries, acting with moderation and firmness, and ever faithful to the country and its laws.”

Such were the words of a soldier ! In uttering them, MacMahon was not seeking popularity as a politician. He was well aware of the fact that the public at large had no means of knowing what passed in the Senate Chamber, and in all probability would never know. He boldly exposed himself to the ill-will of the Emperor and his retainers, for the sole reason that the dictates of conscience and the imperious mandate of duty demanded it. Spoken in those days, his words remained without an echo : they are now a fitting and lasting honor to his memory.

On the resignation of President Thiers, the National Assembly (May 24th, 1873) elected Marshal de MacMahon President of the Republic. This position the Marshal had never sought for, nor expected. When, on the evening of the 23d, he was officially informed that if M. Thiers persisted in his resignation, and it should be accepted, he himself would receive the vote of the majority for the Presidency, he was greatly agitated. Twenty-four hours later, after a protracted and stormy session, he was chosen by 390 out of 392 votes, representing the combined strength of the various divisions of the Right—the Left entirely abstaining from the ballot. When M. Buffet, the President of the Chamber, accompanied by a number of deputies, waited upon the Marshal to notify him of his election, he at first refused its acceptance. In order to overcome this unwillingness it was found necessary to appeal to his well-known devotion to country, of which he had given so many and convincing proofs.

Some months later, under circumstances of very grave moment, Marshal de MacMahon had occasion to remind his immediate party friends of the official conditions imposed upon himself. He had tendered portfolios to two distinguished deputies, whose services he desired in the formation of a new cabinet, but each of whom hesitated about giving a final answer.

“I will give you two hours for reflection,” he observed curtly.

“Two hours ! it is insufficient,” cried one of the two addressed.

“Insufficient !” reiterated the Marshal ; “why, only ten minutes were accorded me for consideration of the question of the Presidency.”

This was no exaggeration. Ten minutes only were.

given him in which to decide the question of to be or not to be the successor of M. Thiers. It was then, as in all other important epochs in his career, that he was made to recognize the necessity of prompt action. That which his country confided to his care he accepted as a soldier the command of a superior, charged with the defense of a post of honor.

And, indeed, it must be confessed that the position was anything but a congenial one to the Marshal-President. It was not long before he began to feel ill at ease in the midst of exciting political intrigues, at once perplexing and distasteful. In the volume which we have devoted to his Presidential record, we have endeavored to set forth with as much truthfulness as impartiality the underlying motives which actuated his administration of office, and from which we quote :

“ Called to the Presidency by the majority of the National Assembly, as to a post of social defence ; unexpectedly summoned from the life of the camp without having acquired that political education equal to the demands of the highest governmental position, Marshal de MacMahon accustomed himself, during a period of three years, to consider not only the mandate of France, but the will of the majority that had elevated him to the direction of state. He considered himself pledged to that majority for the faithful execution of its will, no less than to the country, the best interests of which he had sworn to uphold and maintain. The tendencies of his mind, fortified alike by the experiences of the past and demands of the present, led him to regard the Republican party as dangerous to social order, and prevented him from willingly seeking conservators within its ranks. In a word, the mission with which he was intrusted on the 24th of May, 1873, appears to have

been understood and undertaken by him as a warrant of defense against this very party.

“In truth, something else *was* expected of the President of the Republic other than the one object for which the greater number of those who had chosen him originally conspired. It was expected, even among his opponents, that he would forget party allegiance, elevate the standard of executive power above factional strife, and become President of France instead of the coalition.

“Such a position, above all, would have best suited the Marshal, but a thousand symptoms plainly revealed the fact that he was beset by a partisanship to which he considered himself, by the result of the 24th of May, too thoroughly committed to abandon without dishonor. The irresponsibility of the Presidential office is without doubt an admirable and valuable fiction in a monarchical constitution, but it is utterly impracticable in republican government. It was quite as impossible for Marshal de MacMahon to have represented in the eyes of Europe and France any other opinions than those of the majority which he represented, as it would be in the case of his successor to-day.”

We might add, furthermore, that when this majority was vanquished on electoral grounds, Marshal de MacMahon promptly accepted the situation as personal to himself, and governed his action accordingly. He resigned his office.

Apropos of the 16th of May, it has been averred that the Marshal on that day succumbed to the passions of those about him. A “word of command from Rome” was absurdly signalled; likewise a “daring manœuvre on the part of the Duc de Broglie.” These rumors were as unfounded as they were improbable, and the simplest solution is truth. Nothing in the act of the 16th of

May was either advised or prepared. A combination of unfortunate circumstances, of imprudent counsel, of violent recriminations, had provoked the Marshal's extreme ire ; on the 16th of May it broke forth. But he acted alone, and those most surprised by his course were the very men who were accustomed to receive his confidences, but who, on this occasion, had not been admitted into the secret of his motives.

We still remember having met at the Elysée, on the morning of the 17th of May, the Duc de Broglie, to whom everybody attributed the responsibility for what had just occurred. He himself was surprised almost to consternation. He said :

“ Who would have believed this of the Marshal ! But after all, what is the use of bewailing ? We have all been thrown overboard, and must swim.”

The Marshal, when questioned, exclaimed :

“ I have had enough of Simon. I can no longer tolerate his presence. And now comes Decazes, who proposes Dufaure for Minister ! I do not desire it ; I have written Fourtou to assist me in extricating myself from this difficulty.”

It appears that M. de Fourtou was so little anxious to involve himself in the enterprise that the Marshal's letter followed him to Périgord, from whence he did not return until after he had received it—as in the case of De Broglie, who only returned from Normandy on learning of the dismissal of Jules Simon.

Thus it will be seen that it was the audacity of the Marshal, and that alone, which brought confusion worse confounded to the ranks of all parties. But the political chessboard is quite another thing from the battlefield. One does not proceed by the same methods, and the manœuvres which succeed in the latter case, frequently

miscarry in the former. The period of the 16th of May was for the Marshal a long *désillusion*, and when he suddenly became conscious of the fact that he had been deceived in his conjectures—that the majority of the country, contrary to his belief, was *not* in accord with his administration—he wished to retire from office. A sense of duty, however, kept him in his position for fifteen months longer.

If, as a statesman, Marshal de MacMahon was powerless to avert the difficulties everywhere springing up about him, as the representative of power he realized most fully the responsibilities he owed to those who had elected him. His name, origin, character, and family connections, together with his brilliant military services, had created for him throughout Europe an exceptional position. President of a Republic, he was, in his relations with every European court, treated on the recognized equality of a sovereign. France incarnated herself in him, simply because he was her highest military illustration. Abroad his name was the synonym for glorious deeds. What diplomatic negotiations might not thus be facilitated! All Europe reposed in him unlimited confidence. His presence at the seat of government immeasurably strengthened France.

At home, also, he was not without the power to please. Even those who regretted that a condemned party man should remain in power had, nevertheless, entire confidence in his loyalty and honesty. He was fully conscious how much weight his soldierly renown carried with it among foreign governments. While many regretted his political tendencies, and blamed his lack of faith in the efficacy of a purely Republican régime, at the same time they did not hesitate to speak in terms of warmest admiration of his patriotism, his disinterest-

edness, and the brilliancy which his sumptuous manner of official entertainment gave the executive power. He expended in the outlay of his Presidential hospitalities not only his salary, which he never sought to have increased, but even his private income so liberally that his official tenure reduced his fortune in no inconsiderable degree. Not a sovereign or other highly distinguished personage visited or passed through Paris at that time without becoming his guest. Reception followed reception at the Palace of the Elysée, on a scale of sumptuousness rivaling any of the European capitals. At the same time he remained always and despite all things the simple soldier and servant of his country. Leaving purely political matters in the hands of his ministers, personally responsible for their conduct, for his own work he chose the rehabilitation of the army. Every day he occupied himself assiduously, bringing his extensive military acquirements and ripe experience to bear upon the one task which to him was indeed a labor of love. In this direction his efforts were incessant. He visited the different forts and barracks, held repeated reviews, and inspired the entire country with much of his own military ardor. He made the seat of government a busy hive, wherein patriotism was the only inspiration, and France the sole inspirer.

It is but just to say that, if in purely political matters he was, as has been asserted, hesitating and easily misled, he became truly superb when the soldierly spirit reasserted itself. This was especially noticeable during his journey in Brittany in 1879, and his tour of inspection throughout the departments of the north. In proportion as the etiquette of official ceremonies and speeches made him impatient, so did he again become content and ardent in the arsenal and the camp. There

it was that the observer became most impressed with his rare intelligence and tact. One day, in a western city, he visited the government barracks. The battalions were in full trim, and he passed the entire length of the ranks. Suddenly one of the captains was seen to leave his command, advance toward the Marshal, and present a petition. The latter took the folded paper and, without reading a line, passed it to one of his aides. But the expressive contraction of the Marshal's brow plainly indicated that he considered the proceeding of the officer an infraction of military discipline, and that he would hardly tolerate a repetition of the offence. Nevertheless, a few days after it *was* repeated in another city, and under similar circumstances. On this occasion, however, it was the commandant of the post who quitted his place, petition in hand. The Marshal hesitated a moment, and then in his severest tone said :

“Before receiving your condemnation to fifteen days' imprisonment in the guard-house, transmit your petition to Colonel Broye.”

Here we have an illustration of the Marshal's keen appreciation of army discipline. In his military life similar instances might be mentioned by the hundreds, some of them under circumstances highly dramatic. The phrase “*J'y suis, j'y reste*” of the Malakoff tower has become legendary. During his journey through Brittany, the Marshal, by his marvellous opportuneness, won over the entire population. They honored him, not on account of his politics, not as the man of the 24th of May, not because he was President of the Republic, but as the soldier, the Marshal of France, whose grand achievements had become the heritage of the nation.

With a greater coolness in the exercise of his political prerogatives the Marshal might have become an incom-

parable leader. But he could not and would not consent to occupy the high position to which he had been called as a simple lay figure of the state. On taking possession of the Presidential chair he said : " Confidence is not a matter of enactment, but my actions shall be of a character to command it." These words, many times repeated under various forms, fully summed up and justified his conduct—in his own eyes at least. After the elections of 1876 he apprehended great social peril, and in order to avert it brought about the 16th of May. At the beginning of the year 1879 this peril seemed to him even more formidable, but this time he was powerless to act. Therefore he retired from office because he could not sanction, by his continuance at the head of affairs, a policy of which his judgment disapproved.

Under pressure of public opinion and pledges for his programme, Minister Dufaure had entered upon a course of revocations. This was the favorite conception of the Marshal—a *Republic without Republicans!* The Republicans triumphed, and each day their part in the distribution of places became more and more enlarged. The Marshal saw his friends—those who had been his devotees for six years—gradually sacrificed. With anger in his mind he had already attested the disgrace of many of them with his own signature. Nevertheless he restrained his passion until the day when the rising tide of Republicanism threatened his generals. Then he turned at bay !

Perhaps (and many of his friends have so thought and said,) he carried his scruples to excess, for, after all, his retirement could not save the men whom he sought to protect, while it *did* consummate the defeat of his party. But it is only natural to infer that, weary of the responsibilities and disappointments of office, he was seek-

ing some pretext through which to repass honorably to private life. The military project was the work of the ministry itself, and its success afforded him the very opportunity. He lost no time in availing himself of it.

It was from the proceedings of a council of ministers on the 28th of January, 1879, that these demands were formulated. The Minister of War having unexpectedly announced an early *mouvement* among the commanders of the army corps, of whom five (Generals Lartigue, Bataille, Bourbaki, de Montaudon, and du Barrail) were summarily placed upon the retired list, the Marshal protested. In his opinion those generals, not having reached the prescribed term of service, were protected by law, and could not, therefore, be detached from active duty. From this interpretation of the law the dissension arose. The Marshal from his standpoint was willing to make an exception in the cases of General Lartigue and General Montaudon, who were both ill and desirous of retiring, but not in the case of the others.

“Let some one acquaint me with the cause of this severity,” he exclaimed at a meeting of the Ministry, “and if I am convinced of the unworthiness of these men, I will subscribe to the disgrace you seek to put upon them; but if it is simply for the purpose of gratifying passions of which I disapprove and deplore, I will not sacrifice them—*some one else must do it!* The constitution invests me with the command of the army: *I will not contribute to its disorganization!* To strike down the generals whom I esteem, and who have done nothing to warrant such treatment, is disorganization itself. What offense has Bourbaki committed? what Bataille? and Barrail, one of our best cavalry generals—with what have you to reproach him? No more than yourselves do I wish to see politics controlling army matters. In

two especial cases have I given indubitable proof of my sentiments in this regard—first, in relieving Admiral Laroncière le Nourry of his command, and, second, in dismissing my life-long personal friend, General Ducrot. Let anybody point out to me, among those whom you now unjustly propose to place upon the retired list, some reprehensible act he has committed, and I will sign; otherwise, no! I am responsible for the army before the country, and I will not permit infringement upon my own legally accorded right. Turn out the prefects and public magistrates if you like, but the generals, *never!* I will resign sooner than consent to it. If I did remain in power after the 14th of December, if for a whole year I did consent to endure repeated mortifications almost unbearable, it was simply and solely for the protection of the army. If to-day I abandon it, if I could be forced into an act unlawful to its interests and detrimental to the country, I would dishonor myself, and would no longer dare to look my children in the face.”

We have quoted at length the response of the Marshal to his ministers because it evinces his real sentiments on the subject, no less than the importance he attached to the question with which he was unexpectedly confronted. It is proper to add that he was cognizant of the fact that his ministers of the 16th of May proposed bringing an accusation against him, which his sensitiveness forbade him to suffer. Thus it was that he sought a pretext for retirement, and found it on sufficiently plausible grounds.

M. Dufaure and his colleagues at once tendered their resignations, but he refused to accept them, and he it was who, on the next day, with all the deference of a soldier and patriot, returned his mandate of power to the representatives of the people, from whose hands he had received it nearly six years prior. His letter of resigna-

tion contains this sentence : “ In quitting the Presidency, I have the satisfaction of knowing that, during the fifty-three years which I have consecrated to the service of my country, I have always been guided by a sense of honor, duty, and devotion.” These words constitute no vain apology ; they convey the exact truth. As is well known, the Senate and Chamber of Deputies convened on the same day that the resignation of Marshal de MacMahon was promulgated, and elected M. Jules Grévy in his stead. The latter had only just learned of his election when the Marshal was announced.

“ I wished to be the first,” said the illustrious soldier as he entered, “ to salute the new President.”

The Marshal was entirely sincere in this step, which he was in no wise bound to take, and which profoundly touched his distinguished successor. It was with him the old obligation—the call of duty to which he never failed to respond !—which prompted this spontaneous homage.

Retired from office, the second President of the French Republic can never be accused of attempting to put difficulties in the way of his successor. He has retained neither anger nor malice, for this valiant soldier is, above all things, a patriot and a Frenchman !

LÉON GAMBETTA.

[LÉON MICHEL GAMBETTA was born at Cahors, Department of the Lot, April 2d, 1838. His father was of Genoese origin, and his mother a Frenchwoman, the daughter of a well-to-do provincial chemist. As a boy he attended the Roman Catholic seminary of his native town, in accordance with the wishes of his parents, who originally designed him for the priesthood. This calling, however, did not satisfy his youthful inclinations, and was subsequently abandoned. His own predilection at that time was the study of medicine, but the accidental loss of one of his eyes caused a change in his plans. He then determined to devote himself to the law, and was graduated at the College of Toulouse at the age of eighteen. Shortly afterward he repaired to Paris and entered the office of M. Crémieux, a distinguished advocate. During the earlier years of his life at the capital he occupied a small apartment in the Latin Quarter, and was a frequenter of the students' clubs. He was exceedingly popular with his fellow-students, but his outspoken political sentiments soon brought him under the surveillance of the police. He was admitted to the bar in 1859, and in 1862 received his first brief. On that occasion he assisted M. Crémieux in the defence of Greppo, who was prosecuted for conspiring against the Empire, and spoke in the defence so ably that the Imperial Prosecutor privately congratulated him. He took an active part in the political contest of 1863, when Paris chose all of its nine members of the Corps Législatif from the Opposition. His connection with the Baudin case first brought him into general notice. Baudin was accused, among other things, of opening a subscription list in aid of the *Reveil* newspaper, which had been proscribed. In a Paris police court young Gambetta delivered a speech attacking the Empire, which, for oratorical vigor, is almost without a parallel in the French language. In 1869 he was first elected to the Corps

Législatif by Belleville, a suburb of Paris, and by a circumscription of the city of Marseilles.

Gambetta entered the legislative body the central figure of a group of men sworn never to accept the Empire, nor to forgive the Emperor for the crime of the *coup d'état*. "Irreconcilables" they were called, and they most willingly accepted the title. The young leader made little effort to prevent the declaration of war in 1870, and was astonished when he found that the Empire was powerless to protect the country. With the fall of the Empire Gambetta was proclaimed one of the members of the "Government of National Defence," being made Minister of the Interior at Paris. He wished, however, to be in the thick of the fray, and, on October 7th, he left Paris in a balloon, reaching Tours after numerous adventures. There he was invested with the portfolios of the Ministers of War and of the Interior, and at once entered upon an unprecedented career. He negotiated loans, named generals, raised armies, and quelled insurrections; and his voice was heard everywhere, especially in the Midi of France, never sounding a retreat, but always inciting resistance.

When the National Assembly of 1871 was convoked at Bordeaux, Gambetta found himself the chosen delegate of ten departments. He entered the Assembly as the representative of the Lower Rhine, fought desperately against the conclusion of peace with Germany, and when at last his counsels were rejected, and the Assembly voted to sacrifice Alsace and Lorraine, he withdrew from that body, followed by the representatives of the ceded provinces. He would not even remain in France, but retired to St. Sabastian in Spain. The new elections of July summoned him back to France.

In the new Assembly Gambetta was the acknowledged Republican leader, and so continued up to the day of his death. He combated the "Septennate," and sharply criticised Marshal MacMahon. For a speech at Lille, in 1877, he was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment on a charge of insulting the President of the Republic! Gambetta's best qualities as a leader were displayed during the memorable struggle following Marshal MacMahon's civil *coup d'état* in 1877. The Simon Ministry was dismissed without justice or reason, and a Reactionary Ministry, headed by the Duc de Broglie and M. de Fourtou, installed in its place. In the elections which followed,

Gambetta was the master-spirit of the Opposition. They resulted in a crushing defeat for the Government. The Marshal at length resigned, and M. Jules Grévy was immediately elected in his place. On the accession of M. Grévy to the Presidency of the Republic, Gambetta was chosen President of the Assembly, and became thereafter the virtual ruler of France. In the autumn of 1881 he was forced, much against his inclination it is believed, to take office, but his premiership lasted only ten weeks—the downfall being brought about through the failure of the project known as the *Scrutin de Liste*.

The death of Gambetta, *à propos* of which a scandalous canard was set afloat by his enemies, was due to the accidental discharge of a pistol, inflicting a wound in the hand, from which resulted blood poisoning. His last hours were full of bodily suffering. The death struggle began on the evening of December 31st, 1882, and five minutes before the advent of the new year he was dead.]

How suddenly this biography of the most distinguished statesman produced by the French Revolution of the present epoch has been changed to a lamentable necrology, at the moment when, in the full possession of all his intellectual vigor, he was standing upon the very threshold of his highest expectations and fondest dreams !

This organizer of the new Republic never found the time, nor availed himself of the opportunity, to organize a rule of conduct for his own immediate life. This model of political prudence failed utterly in the knowledge and practice of the laws of personal prudence. Gambetta was mindful only of his country ; his sole egoism—to love, without stint, the Republic and France. Our greatest statesman sought for and found his own inspiration in the conscience, progress, and glory of his country. He lived only a public life. His vital power, his nervous force, his mental activity, were expended with unlimited prodigality, and he sacrificed willingly

and joyously the many gifts with which nature had endowed him, in order to fill to greater repleteness the manifold public obligations thrust upon him.

To this fact, doubtless, may be ascribed that incessant vibration of his entire being—that never-flagging spirit, that Rabelaisian laugh, those terrible sarcasms, no less than, on the other hand, those seductions of friendship, the most tender and faithful, of which there are so many living witnesses. Thus may be explained his matchless oratorical power, so far surpassing all others, that, leaving far behind the set forms and figures of scholastic rhetoric, swept on with overwhelming force through the depths of passion, ire, joy, and patriotic fervor, to its final irresistible conclusion. Certain it is that Gambetta possessed in the highest degree the faculty of electrifying vast assemblies with the magnetism of his own ambient genius.

Through an utter disregard of personal safety (a fact that has been proved beyond the slightest shadow of doubt), Gambetta one day carelessly pressed his hand on a revolver. It was discharged, and the fatal bullet which, though wounding but slightly, was the actual precursor of his death, struck the French nation full in the breast.

Gambetta's life may well be compared to a torrid and dazzling summer of unexampled and prodigious maturity. Raised in a moment to the highest pinnacle of popularity and influence, he perished with equal suddenness. The resplendent torch was extinguished before the zenith of his renown had been reached. The morning of public life had but scarcely dawned : it was not permitted us to behold the noontide splendor and the evening's glorious decline !

Millions were affected by his death ! A hundred

million joined in solemnizing his obsequies ! Humanity wept beside his bier !

Certain persons pretended that so great and imposing funeral pomp would result in injury to the cause of Republicanism—that it was contrary to the spirit of democratic institutions ! Such philosophy could have found existence only in narrow minds. Over the grand sepulchre where so vital a factor of her public life was hidden forever, France could not have refrained from the proper exercise of her national right in thus honoring her greatest son. With integral unity she joined in the movement, and hand in hand walked before the nations—not the France reduced, mutilated, arbitrarily compassed and defined by the sophistries of victory, but France renewed, rejuvenated, complete in all her plenitude of grandeur, proclaiming in a single voice *his* inflexible fidelity.

At these obsequies, profoundly human and exempted from the least appearance of an apotheosis, the country purposed to reunite the most prominent witnesses of its prosperity and progress. Imperial Europe never conceived, much less produced, a similar spectacle. The frenzied deification of Garibaldi at Rome sinks into insignificance when contrasted with the imposing solemnity of this event. The thrilling spontaneity of a noble people, the unanimous pulsation of the popular heart, will ever remain one of the greatest phenomena in the revolutionary life of the present century.

Such a spectacle was, after all, but a part of the dead statesman's decisive work. His public life, so intense but nevertheless so thoroughly regulated, was his pride, his incentive, his inspiration—nay, his very breath ; and none other besides Gambetta could have given to the Republic the confidence it now enjoys among all classes.

But his spirit will always be present with us, and our offspring will reap the benefits of a political policy the most enlightened and enduring that has ever taken root in the soil of true democracy. The influence of Gambetta in national affairs cannot be overestimated nor resisted, even by those who punished themselves most in opposing the measures he advocated.

Belleville, which idolized him, jealously disputed with the nation the exclusive honor of his representation. But Gambetta belonged to France absolutely—to the *whole* country, and to democracy in general.

The life of Gambetta henceforth confounds itself with the history of the Republic—with its intellect and sentiment rather than its positive laws, and is blended with the very curious and characteristic evolution of the French Republican idea. No matter what may be the issue of this Republican evolution, it will forever remain inseparable from the personal history of Léon Gambetta. He was identified with it from its inception; he it was who inspired, controlled, and directed it, notwithstanding the fact that he exercised the ministerial prerogative for but two short months.

We may date the origin of Gambetta's extraordinary influence from the 14th of November, 1868, when, in pleading for Delescluze, he passed judgment on the great crime of the 2d of December, saying :

“Where were Cavaignac, Lamorcière, Changarnier, Le Flô, Bedeau, and other leaders—the pride and glory of our army? Where were M. Thiers, M. de Rémusat, the authorized representatives of the Orléanist, Légitimist, and Republican parties—where were they? At Mazas, at Vincennes—all these defenders of the law! or *en route* for Cayenne, departing for Lambessa—these despoiled victims of ambition's frenzy!”

M. Vivien, President of the Sixteenth Chamber, endeavored to interrupt with a few civil words this impetuous torrent of invective, but the orator, arrested for a moment by his feeble remonstrance, immediately resumed in a higher key and with increased emphasis :

“ This anniversary,* which you do not care to remember, *we claim for ourselves !* We will ‘ celebrate ’ it always, with increasing devotion ! Every year it will be to us the anniversary of our death !—until the coming of that day when the country, once more the master, shall impose upon you the great national expiation in the name of *Liberté—Égalité—Fraternité !* Oh, you shrug your shoulders ! [The orator was addressing the Imperial Advocate.] Know you, I no more dread your scorn than I fear your menaces ! You may strike us, *but you cannot dishonor us !*”

I can but believe that the foundation stone of the new Republic was then and there laid by Léon Gambetta !

The Imperial Advocate, completely stunned by this outburst of indignant denunciation, cried out, “ But this is no longer pleading !”

In truth it was the fact ! Gambetta, by this brilliant *coup d'éclat* against the *coup d'état*, instantly installed himself in a position for initiating the new political *Propaganda Fide* in France. He had appealed to the military and civil branches of the government—liberals of all parties—through the dominant idea of a union by practicable liberty, the concert of various forces in a conservative republican state, vigorously administered, and relying solely upon popular recognition and mutual maintenance.

Scarcely six months had elapsed since the memorable

* The 2d of December, 1851—period of the *coup d'état*.

philippic of the 14th of November, when both Paris and Marseilles named Gambetta for Deputy, replacing in the latter city the advocate Berryer, who, with one foot already in the grave, deeply regretted leaving to the Republicans alone the honor of protesting against the crime of the 2d of December. From that hour the democracy of the country kept its eye fixed constantly upon the newly-arisen statesman. Other Republicans there were who, from long and distinguished service, still occupied public attention—Jules Favre, Picard, Bancel, and Jules Simon. But in Gambetta the hopes of Republican France instinctively centered. He was surrounded on all sides by jealous factions, anxious each to gain his support of immature dogmas, no less impracticable than conflicting. Yet he never wavered nor once stumbled in the path he had marked out to follow. Sleep and recreation were strangers to him—he was all action! He never soared in the blue empyrean; on the contrary, he “hugged the earth.” The connoisseurs of men saw in him keen political sagacity, united with practical intelligence, already fully developed, and, joined to both, a power of oratory seldom equalled and certainly never surpassed in modern times. In him the imminent Republic recognized its foremost leader.

To the people of Marseilles he said:

“I am bound to prove the intimate alliance between radical politics and the business interests of the country, and, *certes*, no other city of France can better supply the necessary data for this demonstration than your own.”

At a banquet offered him by the students at the *Salle Ragache*, Gambetta expressed himself in these terms:

“If I insist, if I exert all my energies for the accession of the Republic, it is only for the purpose of establishing a true government of and by the people—a government

conscious of its rights and powerful enough to make itself respected. I protest with all my might against the conduct of those who, by dint of attacking governmental institutions, simply because they happen to be placed in the hands of a man who has abused his trust, remain forgetful of the fact that 'the government,' under democratic régime, virtually means *we ourselves!* Not that—(understand me perfectly)—not that the government should overstep its legitimate limits—no, no; I have too much respect for individuals, too much confidence in the mutual development of free forces and united efforts among our citizens. But I should not seek the overthrow of any republican form that would give to society its proper equilibrium. There *must* be a government: it must be *our* government!"

What could be clearer? Thus, in the infinite fancies of figurative rhetoric, and in the majestic sweep of his most impassioned oratory, this thought remained steadfast. It was the immovable pillar of his support, the basis of his political doctrine, the one unique idea toward which everything else tended to converge. The democracy must fit itself to the government of France. Nothing remained of the Empire but an empty name. Gambetta demonstrated, with wonderful prescience and precision, the utter hollowness of the government *de facto*. He spoke of its downfall, not as a seeming possibility, but as an assured certainty. Already he termed it "*our* government," and henceforward, to use one of his characteristic expressions, "the people must prepare for the installation of a democracy with business occupations."

A few days after the banquet tendered him by the students at the *Salle Ragache*, Gambetta accepted his mandate at the hands of the electors of Belleville. To

them he also said that, "The democracy must prepare to endow France with a stable and vigorous government. By what means? By union, concord, discipline. The democratic party should have a democratic discipline—an army corps, and even stragglers as well; nothing is more desirable; but all must form one compact phalanx, steadily marching to the future. If Paris sets the example in point of democratic discipline, following the counsels of her chiefs, entirely repudiating anarchy, France will see before her a determined régime. If each individual will consent to follow the directions given alike to all, if the leaders will maintain complete unity among themselves, this will be the realization of true republican government, and at the same time an assured proof that none will be badly governed."

"Determined régime," "following the counsels of party leaders," "entirely repudiating anarchy"—these were the expressions everywhere employed by Gambetta, from Paris to Marseilles, before assemblies differing widely in composition and temperament. Such were his honest political sentiments—the incorruptible legacy we hold of his prudence, his wisdom, his patriotism, and his unswerving allegiance to the best interests of the Republic!

Gambetta astonished his contemporaries by his prodigious oratorical power, yet he never cultivated oratory as an art. Of all the public speakers who have made the Republican party illustrious, he it was who spoke least for the mere sake of speaking. He spoke to govern! Each discourse was a squared and perfect block in the governmental fabric of the Republic!

Exceptions have been taken to Gambetta's alleged vacillation, but, for my own part, I have always found him surprisingly fixed and stable in his opinions and

action. His policy, as chief of the cabinet of the 14th of November, I can readily and clearly understand. I read it, as from an open book, in his first account rendered to the electors of Belleville, in the first banquet given in his honor by the students at the *Salle Ragache*, in the letter he addressed to the citizens of Marseilles; but more forcibly still, when he forestalled all of his contemporaries in the strife against the Empire. Was this man an upholder of anarchy?—a rebel to his party?—an apostate to his faith? On the contrary, he was the strongest advocate of republican government and substantial administration. Gambetta condemned the Empire, not only on account of its lack of political liberty, but, above all else, because the Empire failed to fulfil the requirements of good government.

Even when Gambetta most needed popularity, before his public career had been fully assured, I could never discover that he ever, on any occasion, made promises of political liberty without bounds, or advocated universal autonomy. He never indulged in mystical fancies nor dreamed Utopian dreams. He promised the democracy a substantial government under conditions carefully set forth and fully defined.

From the tribune of the Corps Législatif, during the first year of his incumbency as a delegate, Gambetta superbly avenged the military, struck down by over-rigorous governmental measures, either for having attended public reunions, or for offering opposition to the Empire on the occasion of the *Plébiscite*. In this effort he tore M. Emile Ollivier limb from limb, and scattered the pretensions of the “Liberal” Empire to the four winds.

The great speech of the 5th of April, 1870, was already a proclamation of the Republic. Gambetta there-

in demonstrated to the Corps Législatif the impossibility of a transformation of the Empire into anything akin to liberalism, and denounced the *Plébiscite* as a farcial imposition. He said :

“Short of the realization of liberty through the Republic, all will be convulsion and anarchy. Nothing veritable or stable is to be looked for in any other direction. Nevertheless, it is not a question of the mere changing of a name. It is of little consequence, so far as I am concerned, whether the first magistrate be known under the title of President, Emperor or King, if the system be the same. No, no ; I will not have the false, but the true Republic—as true in fact as in name !”

Five months later the Republic was proclaimed at the Hôtel de Ville, of Paris under the title of “The Government of National Defence.”

The memorable day of the 4th of September will forever bear witness to the moderation, sagacity, and patriotism of Léon Gambetta. While the Commission of Dethronement was sitting in one of the official chambers of the Palais Bourbon, Gambetta, from the tribune in the legislative hall, bore almost entirely alone the overpowering weight of the situation, proving himself fully equal to the unparalleled responsibility thus suddenly thrust upon him.

The tribune of the hall was filled with excited men, crying, “Dethronement ! dethronement ! *Vive la République !*”

In the midst of this turbulent sea of humanity, calm in the consciousness of his power, Gambetta responded : “Listen, citizens ! I cannot enter into a dialogue with each one of you : let me explain freely my views to all. It is incumbent on you to recognize the fact that the power which has brought so much evil upon the country

has fallen ! [Prolonged applause followed this announcement.] It now behooves you to see to it that this declaration which is about to be acknowledged shall in no wise bear the appearance of alteration through any manifestations of violence. Hence, there are two things most necessary to be done : First, that the representatives of the country be permitted to return and take their places in this hall. Second, that the sitting take place in accordance with the customary rules, in order that (thanks to the freedom of discussion !) the decision about to be given may be absolutely of a character satisfactory to the nation at large.”

Here some one shouted :

“The dethronement has not yet been discussed ; we insist upon the discussion.”

Gambetta continued :

“Let us present before the world a spectacle of responsibility and dignity in the name of the country and liberty—two things which are inseparable—and, as one of the representatives of France, which is able to make itself respected at home and abroad, I adjure you to facilitate by your calmness the return of the deputies to their vacated seats.”

The excitement increasing, M. Schneider rose and quitted the hall, whereupon Gambetta, having repeatedly descended from the tribune, was forced once more to return, and, with M. de Kératry beside him, pronounced the following declaration :

“Citizens ! Inasmuch as the country is in danger ; inasmuch as the necessary time has been allowed the National Representation to pronounce the dethronement ; inasmuch as we constitute the regular power issuing from popular suffrage, *we here and now declare*

that Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte and his dynasty have forever ceased to reign over France !”

But a few moments later, MM. Jules Favre, Picard, Jules Ferry, Jules Simon, Kératry, and Gambetta repaired to the Hôtel de Ville, some going by the right bank of the river, the others by the left, followed by a dense crowd, and surrounded by the National Guard, carrying bouquets in the ends of their muskets.

Thus was founded, on the evening of the 4th of September, the new government, and though destined to a prolonged existence and desperate struggle, both with the foreign invader and domestic enemy, it saw before it from the outset little else than an immeasurable abyss on every side. Poised like a sea rock, around whose base the angry waves of passion hurled their malignant fury, it held aloft in its patriotic grasp, unshaken in the midst of surrounding chaos, the flag of France, and the flickering lamp of imperilled liberty, resolute, hopeful, and brave even in the agony of despair ! If the government of the Hôtel de Ville had acceded to the proposition offered it later by a deputation of the Chamber ; if it had consented to return to the Corps Législatif ; if it had abandoned the one fixed, impregnable point it occupied above the furious political elements, no one can predict the magnitude of the black shipwreck that would have followed. But it carried with it the pledge of the future, as nobly given as it has been honorably and faithfully maintained.

“ M. Grévy was the spokesman of the delegation,” says M. Jules Simon, in his “ Souvenirs of the 4th of September.” “ If we had accepted the conditions proposed to us, the masses would have instantly pronounced us traitors to the Republican cause. I venture to assert

that, if the members of the deputation had been at the Hôtel de Ville for a single hour, they also would have shared our conviction in this particular. The proclamation of the Government had already been issued. M. Picard and M. Gambetta were at that very moment in their respective offices at the departments of the Interior and of Finance.’’

Such was the critical condition in which France found itself unexpectedly placed. Gambetta appears to have started out with two capital ideas, namely—to fix the seat of government at some central point, and, after recruiting new armies, from there advance to the relief of Paris.

In order to reconstruct an administration and organize these armies, Gambetta proceeded to draw largely from every household of the nation the best-fitted material. He selected his military chiefs, without distinction of grade, from all parties. Intrusted by the Government with the general direction of the war, he called to his assistance from the walks of private life many able and faithful men whose names have since become famous—among others, M. de Freycinet, an eminent railroad engineer, who displayed remarkable ability in the position assigned him. Thus it will be seen that Gambetta not only followed the traditions of the French Revolution, but adopted likewise the policy of all great statesmen who have succeeded in founding an existing order of things substantial and permanent.

Unhappily, however, these ideas of Gambetta, logical as they were, were difficult of realization on account of conflicting opinions among the masses. Besides, the most vigorous party of the Government and France had been almost annihilated in Paris, and the effect of so great a disaster upon popular superstition was ominous

in the extreme. Gambetta himself did not succeed in overcoming the prejudice engendered thereby until a full month had been lost in adverse combinations.

At Tours he found himself greatly hampered by the hesitancy of the generals of the Empire, who exhibited little confidence in the young recruits of the army, and less, possibly, in the military plans of the patriotic tribune.

While Gambetta was making every preparation for war, M. Thiers was prosecuting his negotiations for peace. When Gambetta adjourned the elections, M. Jules Favre insisted upon consulting the voters as to whether a treaty should be ratified, or the war be continued!—as if a question such as this could be calmly passed upon by a frenzied people, maddened beyond the bounds of rational consideration!

But it is not our purpose—and indeed it does not lie within our province at the present moment—to discuss the political problems of 1870–71; neither can we follow from day to day all the public acts of the man whose career we have endeavored to condense into a few historic pages.

It was at Tours that Gambetta, combining the direction of the war with his duties as Minister of the Interior, incurred the appellation of “Dictator”—a gratuitous title that clung to him ever after. Our national enemies converted it into a designation of glory, but among his political adversaries and personal opponents it was a theme for dangerous accusation.

“Dictator” is just, if by such a term it is intended to convey the idea that his was the controlling mind of the country. Gambetta *did* personify for the time being France and the Republic before the world. On him all eyes were fixed; about him admiration con-

tended with hatred. But if any one understands by the word "Dictator," an imperious and lawless will, the titular dignity (?) has been mistakenly applied. The contemporaries of Gambetta universally bear witness to his modesty, his moderation, his reserve in judging other men and their actions in the midst of extreme peril. He had a profound sense of, and as profound a respect for, legality and justice. Not a single case can be cited where he used his political power to strike down an enemy or to satisfy purely personal enmity. He had but one ambition, violent and impetuous, born of an ardent love of country—to regain from the conqueror our stolen provinces, and replace France in her former position of proud pre-eminence among the nations.

At the news of the armistice of the 28th of January, Gambetta addressed to the departments of France the celebrated proclamation :

"FRENCHMEN ! Think of our fathers who bequeathed us France, compact and indivisible ! Let us not belie our former history ! Do not permit our traditional domain to be relinquished to the hands of barbarians ! Who will consent ? Not you, Legitimists, who have fought so valiantly under the flag of the Republic, bravely defending the soil of your former kingdom ! Not you, sons of the *bourgeois* of 1789 !"

Then followed the promulgation of the not less famous decree of the 2d of February, in which he declared the *attachés* of the fallen Empire ineligible to seats in the National Assembly.

It was on account of these two acts that the cry of "Dictator" was first raised.

To say that Gambetta could not have retained power except through the distractions of war is easy ; but certainly M. Thiers could never have attained power

except through peace. Even the crime of secret connivances to protract the war in order that the country might thereby become exhausted, has been imputed to Gambetta. Reproaches and abusive epithets were not wanting when it was declared he had too readily acceded to the will of the Government at a time when France was yet free and armed. It has been pretended that he was determined to maintain his political fortune at all hazards. As justly accuse him of feebleness of purpose when he stood alone in opposition to his colleagues at this decisive hour ! As justly pretend that he did not know how, by an energetic and determined act—a real stroke of dictatorship—he could have rescued the country from an impending disaster, threatening its very life !

Could the country have been rescued ? Who can confirm it ? who can deny it ? After the fall of Paris, could France have rehabilitated herself against the redoubtable stroke of fortune, and retrieved her position by the concentration of all her departmental forces ? We, certainly, do not assert it—we are permitted to doubt ; and in cases of this kind, doubts are always legitimate. The conqueror himself, up to the 15th of January, had doubts as to the definitive character of his victory. Since then many have said it was impossible ! What did they *know* about it ? History, both ancient and modern, shows us examples of nations, placed in situations no less desperate than our own, where like recourses have been crowned with victorious results. Yet such examples do not necessarily teach us that we should have conquered, had the war been continued under Gambetta's direction. It will suffice that we remain in suspense as to the opinion of the world !

As for Gambetta, he was master of the situation, and by the terms of his mandate he was empowered to do

whatever seemed proper in the name and interest of the people. The moribund government which had just capitulated at Paris no longer obstructed a free exercise of his mandatory prerogative. He alone represented the country for the time being. He who was called "Dictator" voluntarily gave up power at a moment when none were to be found able to deprive him of it. Since that period, for nearly twelve years past, he has been the undisputed ruler of Republican France. M. Thiers, Marshal de MacMahon, and M. Jules Grévy have succeeded each other, while Gambetta, without occupying the Presidential office, has been virtually the head of the state. The ministry of the 14th of November, 1882, was only a momentary episode, the sudden termination of which was no doubt due to the old charges of dictatorship, revived anew by his enemies.

During these years he never lessened his efforts nor abated by one jot his constant zeal in behalf of the Republic; and, what is chiefly due to him alone, he enlarged the field of action upon which all patriotic Frenchmen could readily unite in the common cause of law and order. Was it not Gambetta who, during those sombre years of the National Assembly, contributed most effectually to checkmate the monarchical conspirators? Was it not he who, with consummate adroitness, labored so earnestly, faithfully, and successfully, to bring about the acceptance of the Republic on the part of those who had hitherto held it up to execration and scorn, as something unworthy of recognition or support—a travesty upon strong government, wanton, mischievous, and beset with peril on every side? Was it not he who persuaded so many confessed sceptics and blind opponents to acknowledge it, at last, to be the best and *only* form of government suited to France?

From the 24th to the 16th of May following, extricating himself from the subtle web of parliamentarianism, Gambetta appeared as the image of the Revolution—dishevelled but triumphant! It was he who, by his inflaming utterance, evoked the whole social strata, awaking to renewed life and vigor the dormant political sentiment of the country, at the same moment when he struck the nascent dictatorship with his famous apothegm, “*Se soumettre ou se démettre!*”*

His canvass of France, undertaken in the face of personal dangers of every sort, and fearlessly prosecuted in spite of threats of arrest and assassination, was something unprecedented in the political annals of the country. Broken in health, suffering from physical infirmities, incurred by exhaustive mental strain, hunted by his enemies, and decried by the official slaves of the “Septennate,” though ever victorious and everywhere irresistible, not Mirabeau himself could have excited the enthusiasm manifested for the great defender of popular sovereignty. “Where shall we go to work to-morrow?” he would ask, when the fatiguing labors of the day had ended. Thus from city to city he journeyed like a “commercial traveler” for the Republic, according to his own happy inspiration.

This heroic “commercial traveler,” in his immortal circuit, possessed all the characteristics of former civilizers of peoples and founders of empires. His passing footsteps prepared the ground for proselytism. He was gifted with almost sacred eloquence, persuading and convincing all who came under its magic spell, both in cities and villages. His work was near akin to evan-

* “Submit or resign”—M. Gambetta’s alternative for the Marshal-President.

gelization. Under a new form he inculcated the most subtle and powerful political doctrine ever known in France, the tenets of which cannot but remain forever fixed in the minds of his countrymen.

Constantly pursuing the realization of his idea—an idea so acceptable to us all, in short, the national idea of the present—he said at Aix, on the 18th of January, 1876 :

“No, in our Republic there exists no exclusiveness : *all* may enter !—our arms are open to receive them.”

At Lille, that industrial capital of the North, which must not be forgotten, for the destinies of the country will, at some future time, there be decided, he also said :

“What we must have is the political interior and exterior of universal suffrage—that is to say, labor, business occupations, and reciprocity between both, together with the stability of the state, reposing upon the consent of the majority.”

At Bordeaux he sounded this note of warning :

“When the people wish to constitute a true democracy, two disastrous reefs must be avoided—obstruction on the one hand, and jealous prejudice on the other. Between suspicion and enthusiasm there exists a desirable rule of conduct for the democracy, which I will express by a single word synonymous with politics—*prudence* !”

Finally (on the 11th of May, 1882), at a banquet given him at Grisel, Gambetta defined his idea more vigorously still :

“Gentlemen, the reunion of to-day I myself ought to celebrate in turn, for if, in the arena of contemporaneous politics, which I entered twenty-five years ago, one invincible and durable passion has animated me, it has been the pursuit, by legal means, by systematic and

methodical politics, of the indissoluble alliance between those who labor and those who possess, and which I have characterized by these words : ‘ *L’alliance du prolétariat avec la bourgeoisie.* ’ ”

He said, “ *twenty-five years !* ” Alas ! these short years were so replete, so suffocated, if we may employ the term, with portentous events, that he lost himself in their passage, and even forgot their number ! He had never stopped to compute the sum of his life, nor the balance of his powers. In a single campaign he expended more vital force than would have served a thousand useless lives ! His political career, active and vertiginous as it was, scarcely embraced fifteen years.

The sepulchre of Gambetta belongs exclusively to the Capital. At some future day it will be removed thither. And thus the body of the great Tribune of the People will be seen once more returning to the scene of his struggles and triumphs, and proclaiming, from horizon to horizon, the *mot d’ordre* of integrity, fidelity, patriotism !

JULES GRÉVY.

[FRANÇOIS PAUL JULES GRÉVY was born at Mont-sous-Vaudrey, Department of the Jura, August 15th, 1813. Graduated at the College of Poligny, he afterward went to Paris and began the study of his chosen profession—the law. On the breaking out of the revolution of 1830, young Grévy, who was then a Latin Quarter student, took part in the fighting, and was one of the captors of the Babylone Barracks. He showed remarkable courage under fire, and when the disturbance was at an end went back to his studies with no other ambition than that of becoming a successful lawyer. But he was speedily diverted from his bent by being retained to defend proscribed conspirators and journalists. Thus he became interested in politics, and, in the course of a few years, was widely known as one of the most distinguished representatives of the Republican party. The events of 1848 made him a member of the Government, and later on his famous amendment to the Constitution, relative to the Presidency, set the seal to his unflinching political opinions. Mistrusting both General Cavaignac and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, he proposed that the Chief Executive of the state be styled “President of the Council of Ministers;” that he be elected for no specified term of office, but be removable at the will of the nation, as expressed through its chosen representatives. The amendment was lost by a vote of 643 to 158. The presidency lapsed into Bonapartist hands, and three years later M. Grévy was driven from political life by the *coup d’état*, an event which he had plainly foreseen at the time of his proposed amendment. From that period he resumed the practice of his profession, and was thereafter little heard of in politics until 1868, when his old supporters of the Jura elected him to the Corps Législatif. His majority over the official candidate was so overwhelming as to create something of a panic at the Tuileries. During his legisla-

tive career, under the Empire, he waged war *à l'outrance* to the existing regime, and was foremost among the opponents of the *Plébiscite* of 1870. Together with M. Thiers he vigorously opposed the war with Prussia. After differing from each other on questions of government policy for many years, these two statesmen came to agree fully on the question of the 4th of September, and a friendship, dating from that eventful day, was established between them, which steadily increased up to the period of the ex-President's death. In 1871 M. Grévy was again elected, by a tremendous majority, and was subsequently made President of the National Assembly, receiving 519 out of the 536 votes cast. In 1873 he resigned that position in consequence of a dispute in which his veracity was impugned. Although re-elected, he refused to serve, and sat in the House until 1876, when he was again returned from the Jura, and raised to the presiding chair of the Assembly by a vote of 462 to 6. Upon the resignation of Marshal MacMahon, on the 30th of January, 1879, he was chosen President of the Republic. The subsequent events in the career of M. Grévy are too fresh in the public mind to require recapitulation.]

THE 30th of January, 1879, will forever remain one of the most memorable dates in the political history of France. On that day Marshal de MacMahon resigned the Presidency of the Republic, and was immediately succeeded in that position by M. Jules Grévy. Thus the acknowledged sentinel of monarchical tradition was compelled to surrender the office he had filled for nearly six years of uncertainty and incessant strife, into the hands of a firm, consistent, and upright defender of the integrity of the Republic.

The good news was received with intense satisfaction throughout the length and breadth of the country. Thenceforth the dreaded possibility of a return to power of the vanquished enemy of free government and popular rights was no longer to be feared. The man whom the nation, through its chosen representatives, had just

elevated to the Chief Magistracy, by family traditions, political convictions, and long and varied experience in national affairs, belonged exclusively to the Republic. Under so wise, enlightened, and patriotic a ruler, the present of the country was amply assured, and its future guaranteed beyond peradventure.

Although but a single remaining year is now lacking to round the period of his life to the allotted threescore-and-ten, in personal appearance M. Jules Grévy seems much younger. Of medium height and compact figure, he has the hardy, muscular build of the mountaineer of the Jura. His head is bald, his features are agreeable and regular, expressive of benevolence and kindly feeling peculiar to his nature. Until recently his short white whiskers formed a sort of natural collar about his face, but of late they have been replaced by a closely trimmed mustache. His bearing and manners are of a kind to inspire instant confidence and respect among all classes.

Such is, in brief, a description of the man who, for three years past, has presided over the destinies of the French Republic. Jules Grévy may not inaptly be termed the offspring of his own works. He was born at Mont-sous-Vaudrey, a little village of scarcely more than one thousand inhabitants, in the department of the Jura, on the 15th of August, 1813. His grandfather exercised the functions of *Juge de Paix* in 1790, after the Constituent Assembly had reorganized the judiciary of the country. His father, François-Hyacinthe Grévy, a volunteer in 1792, was elected chief of battalion by his comrades in arms, and distinguished himself in the wars of Italy and Austria. Returning after the close of these campaigns, he assumed at Mont-sous-Vaudrey, the direction of his family estate, still known as "La Grangerie."

His rural pursuits, however, never interfered with the education of his three sons. Neither the Empire in all its splendor, nor the Restoration with its fruitless attempts at liberty, succeeded in modifying to any extent the political opinions of the volunteer of 1792. Like M. Littré the elder, whose name not long since was proclaimed under the dome of the Institute, he retained his admiration for the Revolution during his entire life. "I do not think," said an eminent statesman, now dead, of M. Grévy, "that any one has more profoundly comprehended the political significance of our great Revolution of 1789, in all its diverse periods. He has adduced therefrom the philosophy of a purely personal history, which, thanks to his masterly ability and inherent good sense, has always guided him to an intelligent conclusion on every point. Early in life he formed his estimate of the prominent figures and events of that grand epoch, with the same calmness and sagacity so remarkably displayed during these latter troublous days of conflicting opinions and obstinate party strife."

No doubt parental instruction had much to do in shaping the opinions of the son. Naturally enough, the young student of the College of Poligny was not unmindful of the great political and social revolution which had transformed the semi-serfs of the Jura into freemen, and of which his own father had been a devoted defender against the soldiers of the coalition. Love for the right, and a profound respect for the principles of the Republic, were the predominant sentiments which influenced and sustained M. Jules Grévy throughout his conspicuous career, and combined to produce the admirable unity of his character and life.

Such was M. Jules Grévy when, in 1839, he defended before the courts the two men, Philippet and Quignot,

accused along with Barbès and Martin Bernard of having taken part in the insurrection of the 12th of May ; such was he again found after 1848, at the Constituent Assembly and in the Legislative Assembly ; in 1868, in the Corps Législatif under the Empire, and in the National Assembly in 1876 and 1877, in the Chamber of Deputies in 1879, and, in short, up to the Presidency of the Republic.

M. Jules Grévy has attained a high rank at the bar of Paris. He has been placed by his *confrères* at the head of the legal fraternity, and is one of the *bâtonniers*, a lively remembrance of whom is still fresh at the Palais de Justice. Nevertheless, it was not from the success of his earlier efforts that he arrived at distinction. After the 2d of December his clients began to fall away from him, persuaded that the magistracy could not view with a favorable eye an advocate so deeply imbued as himself with hostility to the then existing political institutions. But this impression was of brief duration, and he speedily regained his former rank and practice.

One of his associates has drawn a pen-portrait of M. Grévy, which is strikingly accurate, both as regards outline and color.

“ He pleaded with remarkable simplicity, without the least approach to ostentation, and in a peculiarly quiet manner, apparently attaching importance to questions of law and evidence only. He spoke distinctly, in a clear though somewhat effeminate voice, very strikingly in contrast with the vigor of his dialectic ; but beneath his composed and unaffected speech the listener at once recognized an argumentative power of the most comprehensive scope and of the very highest order of excellence.”

What was, or what should be, the best order of fo-

rensic speaking were questions more than once discussed at the legal conferences over which M. Grévy, in his capacity of *bâtonnier*, officially presided. As between the acrimonious philippics of former times and the close analytics of the present age, he chose, practised, and advocated modern over ancient methods, continually dissuading his younger colleagues from imitating Greek and Roman examples. After having demonstrated ancient judicial practice to be essentially the outcome of pomp, arrogance, and artifice, he added : “ Judicial defence is to-day more natural and, necessarily, more convincing and substantial ; more depends upon the matter to be presented than the manner of presentment—upon calm, forcible discussion than pompous, disjointed declamation ; for it is the healthier fruit, ripened by the experience and moderation of modern culture, and sustained by broader enlightenment and more exact reasoning. Its form consists in improvisation. The orator who has worked only upon the ideas, trusts to the impulse of the moment for expression. According to a felicitous phrase, ‘ He knows *what* he is going to say, but does not know *how* he will say it.’ Freed from all restraint, entirely independent of conventional form, he abandons himself to the fervor of happy inspiration. He speaks naturally, not affectedly, giving to each thought a certain originality and vigor, passing any mere aping of the actor’s art. Thus, by improvisation, it is that the orator directly reaches the hearts of his auditors—that he comes into closer communication with them, engrosses their attention, excites their minds to such an extent that they react upon his own ; and, by this continuous magnetic interchange, makes them, as animating factors to his discourse, contributors to, no less than partakers in, his own intellectual triumph ! ”

Elected President of the National Assembly in 1871, M. Grévy still retained his advocate's robes, and was known on a certain occasion to have quitted Versailles for a town in the western part of France for the purpose of pleading in a civil suit. He delighted to meet with his brother advocates at the annual reunions of the French bar, who, as may well be imagined, were always careful to inscribe the name of M. Jules Grévy on the list of counsels of order. It remained thus until the day of his elevation to the Presidency ; and it was not without a certain heaviness of heart that he found his functions as Chief of the State would henceforth prevent his taking further part in the deliberations of the bar of Paris, at which he had sustained his early struggles, and which, but a short time previous, had unanimously placed him at its head.

M. Jules Grévy carried into his political life the habits of investigation and labor which had characterized him at the bar. The author of "*Caractères*" gave the following advice to the ministers and occupants of prominent official stations :

"Have Virtue and Humanity ; and should you inquire, 'What more do we need ?' I would answer, '*Humanity and Virtue.*'"

These two cardinal attributes M. Jules Grévy possessed always, as he nobly demonstrated in 1848, during his representation of the department of the Jura, no less than in the Constituent Assembly, where he made his *début* in opposing the demand for urgency in the prosecution of MM. Louis Blanc and Caussidière. Every one is familiar with his intervention in the discussion of the constitution. His proposed amendment, declaring that the President of the Republic should be chosen by universal suffrage, was a measure of great foresight,

and, had it been adopted, the country would have been saved the encroachment of Cæsarism. His speech on the subject was alike admirable for its patriotic sentiment and sound policy. Why did not the Constituent Assembly listen to the counsels of this staunch and fearless Republican? Had it done so, the Empire would have been impossible, and France saved from invasion and dismemberment twenty years later!

From the adoption of the constitution and selection of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte for President, M. Jules Grévy was incessantly in the breach. His influence increased from day to day in the debates of the Assembly. He was foremost in the ranks of his fellow-defenders of the cause of liberty and equal rights. He contested the law of the 31st of May, as well as the revision of the constitution, voting with Charras for the proposition of the Questors. On leaving the sitting one of his friends asked him what had transpired at the Palais Bourbon. "*Finis République!*" he answered.

One month later the crime of the 2d of December was accomplished!

At the news of the *coup d'état*, M. Jules Grévy repaired immediately to the Mayoralty of the Tenth Arrondissement, and not only on paper and through denunciatory speech, but by the most fearless and vigorous public acts, he challenged the outrage perpetrated upon France. Arrested, with a number of his colleagues, by General Forey, he was sent to Mazas. During his incarceration his house served as a refuge for the Committee of Resistance. M. Jules Favre, in a touching recital entitled "*Le Paravent*," has related how these valiant citizens disposed themselves. After the fusillade in the boulevard Montmartre, any further struggle became impossible. The Committee of Resistance decided

to dissolve itself. M. Victor Hugo emerged from the house of M. Grévy, leaning on the arm of M. Jules Favre. In the street they saw placarded the proclamation of General Saint-Arnaud, Minister of War, forbidding, under penalty of martial law, any reassembling of more than two persons. The renowned poet halted, bristling with anger, and violently declared he would quit the dishonored city without delay. On the other hand, M. Jules Favre asserted his determination to remain and consecrate all his efforts in combating the abject despotism that had triumphed only through popular cowardice. "After this dialogue," writes M. Jules Favre, "the two friends excitedly pressed each other's hands and departed in opposite directions. Each faithfully kept his word!"

There was no occasion for M. Jules Grévy to bind himself by a similar oath. But he resisted the Empire all the same, taking a prominent place in the ranks of the irreconcilable opposition. In 1864 he pleaded for one of the accused in the "Trial of the Thirteen." In 1868 he took part in the great struggle of the Corps Législatif, holding the foremost place among those deputies who were determined to be neither dupes nor accomplices. On the occasion of the *Plébiscite*, he heralded in the legislative body the true principles of honest government. On the 15th of July, 1870, he declared with patriotic indignation against the Ministers of the Empire, who had plunged, "*avec d'un cœur léger*,"* France, deceived, cajoled, and betrayed into a disastrous foreign war!

The Empire having fallen, M. Jules Grévy, on the 5th of September, demanded that the "Government of Na-

* "With a light heart." The phrase employed by M. Emile Ollivier on the occasion of the declaration of war against Prussia.

tional Defence" should issue an order for the election of a National Assembly. Retiring to the Jura, he twice visited Tours in persistent endeavor to gain a delegation favorable to his programme. Much speculation was rife at this period concerning a *salon* of the Hôtel de Bordeaux, at Tours, in which were wont to assemble certain representative personages for consultation on questions of political *délicatesse* with the Delegation. In connection with this subject, strong expressions, both for and against, were commonly current. Since that time, however, a better understanding of the then existing issues has been arrived at. The "conspirators," as they were termed, were M. Cochery, M. Guyot-Montpayroux, M. Tassin, M. Wilson, and M. Grévy. They dined together on the ground floor of the hotel, and reassembled during the evening in the apartment of Madame Pelouze, on the first floor. Madame Pelouze was the sister of M. Wilson, and owner of the famous Chateau of Chenonceaux, where in former days had resided Diane de Poitiers, Catherine de Médicis, and Louise de Vaudemont. The various reports of 1870-71 agree in opinion that she exerted a very great influence on those around her. "Madame Pelouze," remarks a journalist of that day, "is truly very engaging, a strong patriot, blonde, and English 'to the tips of her fingers.' Besides, she is wonderfully endowed with political instinct, and is most graciously disposed toward those who have won for themselves positions of great public trust and corresponding personal influence. She is accustomed to receive with marked expressions of pleasure every person of intelligence and education who may be favored by a presentation."

From this period dates the acquaintance and present existing relations of M. Jules Grévy and M. Daniel

Wilson. It would doubtless have astonished both these gentlemen at the time if anybody had predicted that the former, in less than ten years, was to become the President of the Republic, and the latter a son-in-law in the Presidential household !

When the National Assembly reconvened at Bordeaux, in February, 1871, all parties were in entire accord to call M. Grévy to the presiding chair of that body. The representative of the Jura occupied this position uninterruptedly until the 1st of April, 1873. It was no easy task to direct the debates of an Assembly so widely at variance on matters of governmental policy, seething with partisanship, torn by angry passion, over which constantly occurring outside events exerted extraordinary pressure. The preliminaries of peace with Germany were to be voted for ; Alsace and a portion of Lorraine were about to be wrested from France ! Later came the insurrection of the 18th of March, following the abortive attempts for monarchical restoration. During all these heated discussions, engaged in by an Assembly numbering seven hundred and fifty members, sound judgment, quick discernment, and prompt decision were qualities absolutely essential to a proper conduct of legislative business. Such qualities M. Grévy possessed in a very high degree. On more than one occasion, during the struggle with the Commune, and when the cannon's roar shook the very walls of the Assembly Chamber, his decided attitude and the marked gravity of his language sufficed to assuage the wildest tumult.

Among other instances may be cited the memorable scene occasioned by the summary resignation of M. Victor Hugo. Although the resignation of Garibaldi had been pending since the opening of the session—his certificates of membership embracing four departments—

the Right of the Chamber thought it necessary to institute special inquiry into this quadruple election, in order, as it was claimed, to test the question of legality involved in the claim that foreigners, when elected, should be entitled to seats in the National Assembly. With just indignation M. Victor Hugo ascended the tribune and eloquently recalled the services of the great Italian hero in behalf of France. Murmurs drowned the speaker's voice, in the midst of which M. de Lorgeril, a Breton poetaster, was heard to exclaim, "The Assembly refuses to hear M. Hugo because he does not speak the French language!" The tumult was at its height. Vainly did M. Grévy endeavor to quell the excitement, but all efforts to restore order were useless. Not only did the Right refuse to listen to the great poet, but it demanded, with anger, that he should be called to order! "You refuse to hear me?" then said Victor Hugo. "It is sufficient—I tender my resignation!"

Calmly descending the steps of the tribune, in the midst of continued clamors, he took up a pen, and immediately writing on the rail before him his letter of resignation, handed the paper to the President. M. Jules Grévy adjured the illustrious representative of Paris to control himself, and not thus yield to a momentary impulse. Victor Hugo, taking his hat and turning to the President, said, "I refuse absolutely to remain a member of *such* an assembly!" Whereupon he at once quitted the Chamber.

One is reminded by this incident of a somewhat similar occurrence, which afterward led to the resignation, as President of the Assembly, of M. Jules Grévy himself. This latter event occasioned no little surprise among many, and incurred the severe judgment of a certain few. Had it not been for this resignation, so

stubbornly maintained, it is claimed that the events of the 24th of May would never have happened. All this is conjecture only. M. Jules Grévy in the "profession of faith" which he addressed to the electors of the Dôle in 1876, alluded to these reproaches. After referring to the Republic as that form of government to which he had always remained faithful, he said :

"I labored to found it in the Constituent Assembly of 1848; I upheld it in the Legislative Assembly in 1849, against the attacks which threatened its existence; I battled for it in the Corps Législatif under the Empire; I have defended it against the attempts at monarchical restoration before the National Assembly about to close, and over which I voluntarily ceased to preside when I saw it had taken a course wherein it was impossible for a Republican any longer to direct."

Descending from the presiding chair, M. Grévy remained silent in his place as deputy, until the proposition relative to the prolongation of the powers of Marshal de MacMahon was submitted to the Assembly. His two speeches, delivered on the 5th and 19th of November, 1873, are models of their kind.

It was during the second of these discourses that an incident occurred which very forcibly demonstrated the degree of ascendancy still retained by M. Grévy over the Assembly. He had just pronounced the following words :

"In conferring upon Marshal de MacMahon the provisional power of Government, even beyond your own terms, you exceed your right—you commit an act both inoperative and futile! You yourselves may arrogate this right, but as you have it not, it will neither be recognized nor respected."

At these words the entire Assembly uprose as one

man, the Left acclaiming the orator, and the Right protesting against the sentiments as revolutionary. M. Buffet, who presided, interfered and exchanged some words in a low tone with M. Grévy. When the tumult had somewhat subsided, the latter resumed in these terms :

“ You cannot possibly misinterpret my meaning ; neither can his honor the presiding officer ; I make no appeal either to resistance or revolt.”

Exclamations and protestations followed from the Right, but the speaker continued :

“ It is a contemptible interpretation, unworthy both of yourselves and of me. I *do* make appeal to the public powers which will succeed you, and which will have such respect for your decisions as they are justly entitled to.”

The majority was subdued, accepting without further protestation the words which invalidated in advance the support of the vote they were about to render !

It was a striking spectacle, and one which will never be forgotten by those fortunate enough to be present. The discussion lasted for two days, and in order to terminate it the Assembly decided to extend its sitting. The hour was far advanced, but fatigue, impatience, and unrestrained passion were all overcome by M. Grévy. Coming from any one but himself, the foregoing expressions could not have failed to excite the wildest tumult, such as would have rendered further debate absolutely impossible. The effect was tremendous. This unprecedented régime, which had come to be known under the barbarous appellation of “ Septennate,” was condemned even before its birth !

At the opening of the succeeding session M. Grévy was again called to the presiding chair.

After the 16th of May, when the Chamber was dissolved, M. Grévy defended the elect of 1876 from the accusations put upon them by the "Government of Surprises." The new Chamber witnessed the appearance in the tribune of M. de Fourtou, the man who, in the capacity of minister on the 17th of May, had been driven from his position by the popular vote. This personage, who appeared to consider himself endowed with the qualities of a Morny, but who did not actually exceed the figure of a Pinard, in a laboriously acquired speech attempted to condemn the ministry of M. Dufaure and the Republican majority of the Chamber, for having provoked the citizens into informing against each other. A murmur of expostulation broke forth from almost the entire Chamber. Instantly M. Grévy was on his feet, controlling the tumult. "Will you be silent?" he said. "In order to *learn* you must *hearken*!" The majority applauded, and a comparative silence immediately ensued. But shortly after a fresh clamor was raised. The former minister of Marshal de MacMahon reproached his enemies for having declared war to all Frenchmen not actuated by Republican faith! "*It is a lie!*" was shouted from among the Left. "Order! order!" resounded from the Right, while the Left saluted with loud applause the interrupter, M. Gambetta.

President Grévy, taking advantage of a second of quiet, begged M. Gambetta to withdraw the expression.

"I will withdraw the words when the man who is in the tribune returns to the truth," replied the latter.

"Whatever may be the justice or the truth of the thought to which you have just given expression," gravely remarked M. Grévy, "the rules of the Chamber prohibit the use of unparliamentary language."

“In that case only do I withdraw the words,” said M. Gambetta ; “and M. de Fourtou can finish his speech.”

It was on account of this incident that a duel afterward took place between M. de Fourtou and M. Gambetta, in which, however, no blood was shed on either side.

It has been demonstrated with what authority and adroitness M. Grévy directed the debates of the Chamber. His gravity was always of a benevolent order. It certainly never could be said of him what the poet-author of “Châtiments” said of the other President—that,

“ Ses quolibets mordaient l'orateur au cœur chaud.”

The natural irony of his expressions was of an order that tended to appease rather than envenom discussion. Certain it is, he never entertained the idea of publishing (after the example of M. Dupin, senior) a collection of his interruptions while President of the Chamber !

Such is the man whom the two chambers, reunited in a National Assembly on the 30th of January, 1879, elected President of the Republic. M. Jules Grévy repaired to the Palais de l'Elysée, like a certain former President of the United States to the Capitol at Washington, simply and without the slightest ostentation.

While residing in his third-story apartment in the rue Volney, his clients were received each morning in a study of almost severe aspect. On either side of the chimney stood two large bookcases of dark wood. The shelves were filled with law books and miscellaneous volumes of general literature in splendid bindings. A large table, literally heaped up with briefs, occupied the centre of the room. Brown leathern chairs were conveniently at hand on all sides. On the mantel stood a

black marble clock, between two large vases of the same material. Several rare and valuable paintings adorned the walls, prominent among which were masterpieces by Latour, Potter, Hobbema, and Rousseau.

The master of the house led a thoroughly well-regulated life. He was an early riser, and busied himself with the newspapers until nine o'clock ; from nine to eleven he received his visitors, after which he repaired to the Palais or the Assembly. During the entire sitting, even when he presided over the Assembly, M. Grévy habitually walked to the railway station of Saint-Lazare, carrying his portfolio under his arm. A stranger, seeing him pass, would scarcely have taken this quiet, unassuming man for the President of an Assembly styled sovereign—the man to whom, on the occasion of the new year, President Thiers paid his first homage and good wishes !

M. Grévy is an enthusiastic lover of objects of art as well as of books. It was no uncommon thing, at this period, to see him, on quitting his house, take the shortest route to the rue Drouot, where he made liberal purchases of bronzes, statuary, and paintings. When leisure afforded him the opportunity, he was accustomed to take a stroll through the Champs Elysées.

Since his elevation to the Presidency of the Republic M. Grévy has been forced to modify certain details of his simple life. The ministerial councils, official visits, dinners, and receptions now occupy the greater part of his time. His position of host and Chief of State he fills admirably. But notwithstanding the fact that his obligations have increased, his life-long tastes have undergone no change, and he retains as firmly as ever his old repugnance to anything akin to ostentation. Unlike Louis-Philippe and Napoleon III., no less than

M. Thiers and M. de MacMahon, all of whom were constantly seeking opportunities for official visits to the provinces, M. Grévy might almost be said to shun such occasions. He very rarely indeed accepts the numerous invitations extended him by the municipalities of the various departments to attend public celebrations. He did, however, consent to visit Cherbourg in the summer of 1880, on the occasion of the great naval display. The Presidents of the two Chambers and several members of the ministry accompanied him. He received a most enthusiastic welcome. On the evening of his arrival, M. Jules Grévy, on foot and carrying a cane in his hand, emerged from the Maritime Prefecture, accompanied only by two friends. He was immediately recognized and vociferously cheered by excited thousands, who respectfully joined in procession behind him. A sovereign people felt themselves fittingly personified in this one truly sovereign man !

But the President of the Republic gladly escapes from such honors whenever it is possible. As soon as the parliamentary vacation has arrived, he quits Paris for his modest country home at Mont-sous-Vaudrey, which possesses for him the same charm that the country retreat of Tusculum possessed for Cicero. There he is known to all, loved by all—from the old men who recall vividly the days of Charles X. and of the “Citizen King,” down to the very children, who have been taught to venerate the name of Grévy. It is certain that the electors of the Jura must have had the most profound attachment for him, when, even in the very zenith of Imperial power (1868), they chose him deputy by a majority of more than ten thousand votes, despite the most vigorous efforts that the Empire could put forth against his candidacy !

During the month of September the inhabitants of Mont-sous-Vaudrey are accustomed to see emerge, each morning, from "La Grangerie," a man clad in a blue shooting-jacket, and carrying a gun upon his shoulder. His head is amply protected from the sun's rays by one of those umbrella-like straw hats peculiar to the country. From time to time he stops at the door of a cottage for a moment's chat with the occupants, who come trooping forth to greet him, and, should the interview be protracted, he will sometimes enter and engage the little ones in wonderful discussions of fabulous nursery lore. This sturdy mountaineer, this unpretending *bourgeois*, this congenial "hail-fellow-well-met," this paragon of neighbors, this universal guide, counsellor, and friend, is—*The President of the French Republic!*

Certain light-witted journals have considered it in good taste to jest M. Grévy on account of his love for the chase and the pleasure he appeared to take in a game of billiards or of chess. Terrible reproaches, it must be confessed, and especially so when applied to the Chief of the State! Perhaps these over-zealous critics are ignorant of the fact that George Washington, who certainly made a considerable figure in the world's history, after retiring to Mount Vernon, daily mounted his horse and visited his farms; or that the late Lord Palmerston, who is not the first among people of eminence guilty of the same grievous offence, passed an hour each day in his billiard-room!

M. Grévy is not a "professional" conversationist—at least not after the manner of M. Thiers, who talked always, and upon all subjects, as much for the edification of himself, probably, as out of consideration for others! "His [M. Grévy's] conversation," writes a well-known member of the bar of Paris, evidently well

acquainted with the subject of this sketch, "so far as political matters are concerned, is the most enlightened and instructive I have ever listened to. Upon every topic of governmental speculation and practice he is a ready speaker, that is to say, having long studied the varied problems of statecraft, he speaks with extraordinary clearness and corresponding ease. He is particularly fond of the society of young men, and they always accord him the heartiest and warmest reception, when chance brings him among them. One of the chief delights of his conversation is his propensity to introduce contemporaneous history in a most pleasing and instructive form. So great is the attachment manifested for M. Grévy among his younger admirers, that the question has sometimes been pleasantly mooted, as to whether they could not acquire some miniature republic, and make him perpetual president of the same!"

This happy allusion to the famous amendment of 1848 is more exact than one would imagine at first thought. The title was of little importance to the orator of the Constituent Assembly. Those who endeavored to prevent it found it a conflict between the Assembly and one man, following the direct election by the people of the chief of executive power. Hence M. Grévy was able, without violating his former "profession of faith," to accept the Presidency of the republic in 1879. As for the rest, the picture resembles him to this very day, for M. Grévy is a charming conversationist, for all who prefer frank, open, honest speech to idle equivocation and empty *badinage*.

M. Grévy has not confined himself exclusively to politics among his interlocutors, be it understood. Literature, science, and the arts enter largely into and form a great part of his conversation. He is thoroughly

conversant with history, ancient and modern, and his entire familiarity with the poets is clearly apparent. In short, the portrait he has drawn of Berryer, in his eulogy at the grave of the renowned advocate, indicates that he possesses all the qualities of an author, and that he was capable of winning distinction in letters, had he chosen literature instead of law as a profession.

President Grévy has sometimes been compared to Louis-Philippe, not only on account of practical methods, but for the art (?) of making his opinions triumphant in the Chamber—all the while appearing to be unfamiliar with party quarrels. This comparison, intended as a reproach, appears to me as a gross exaggeration. In the Chambers of the Monarchy of July, there remained the King's party, and the representative system was broken long before the 24th of February, 1848. We look in vain to-day, both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate, for the party of the President, and we cannot see that the constitutional régime has been perverted under the influence of a personal and irresponsible power.

But there is one point of resemblance, it must be admitted, between King Louis-Philippe and President Grévy. "Before signing a sentence of death," says M. Cousin, "he [Louis-Philippe] devoted himself to the most intimate research, in order to find some point of justification by which he could reasonably exercise the power of clemency. In his councils he actually pleaded the cause of his would-be assassins!"

M. Jules Grévy has never had occasion to plead for *his* would-be assassins, for never has a dagger been pointed at his heart. But since he has occupied the Chief Magistracy, which invests him with full pardoning power, he has also habitually examined most carefully

the papers of condemnation, in order to discover, if possible, any attenuating circumstance that has perchance escaped the attention of the court. He has even been reproached for having virtually abolished the death penalty, from the circumstance, no doubt, that capital punishments have become so very rare under his Presidency. Admitting that M. Grévy has determined to leave the executioner idle, in order to prove that the scaffold is not absolutely an adjunct of good government: the precise limitations of the pardoning power nobody has ever thought of regulating, and the moment the Chief of the State exercises this prerogative independently, why demand that he should sign the warrants simply as a matter of form, when his instincts and his philosophy are opposed to the death penalty? Therein exists a sentiment deeply reverential—therein rests an additional proof of the conscience and lofty purpose which M. Grévy carries into all the official acts of his magistracy! To remain faithful to the convictions of his entire life—such has been, is now, and ever will be his motto. By following it inflexibly, he has honored himself, his country, and the Republic.

LOUIS BLANC.

“Louis Blanc is an apostle of the Ideal ; a philosopher as well as an orator ; a brave militant ; an historian who, from the sodden wastes of the Past, upturns the furrows of the Future.”

VICTOR HUGO.

[JEAN JOSEPH CHARLES LOUIS BLANC was born at Madrid October 29th, 1811. His father was Inspector-General of Finance under King Joseph Bonaparte, and his mother was a Corsican of the celebrated family of Pozzo di Borgo, the inveterate foe of Napoleon. It was from her that young Louis derived that enthusiastic and impetuous temperament which marked his turbulent career. Quitting college at the age of nineteen, he went to Paris, where he completed his education through the financial assistance of his uncle, Ferri-Pisani. He first turned his attention to law, but afterward abandoned it for literary pursuits. Journalism appeared to open for him the most congenial and successful field of labor. Naturally aggressive, he soon became one of the foremost agitators of his time. The stormy period of 1848 brought him into active politics. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly, in which he distinguished himself especially in securing the abolition of capital punishment, and the successful establishment of much-needed legislation in the interest of the working classes. He also obtained a repeal of the law by which the Bonaparte family was doomed to perpetual exile. To him Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte was indebted for his return to France and his subsequent opportunity to work Mephistophilean mischief. The opposition of Louis Blanc to the popular invasion of the Hall of the National Assembly on November 15th, 1848—the occasion of the violent demonstration in favor of Poland—led to his proscription, and he escaped into England, where for twenty years he maintained his residence. It was there that he wrote and published his justly celebrated “History of the French

Revolution," in twelve volumes, and his "Révélations"—the latter in refutation of Lord Normanby's work on the Revolution. He meanwhile corresponded largely with the Paris journals, notably *Le Temps*. After the fall of the Empire he returned to France and entered the National Guard to oppose the Commune. During the Paris insurrection a valuable manuscript of his work on the "Salons of the XVIII. Century" was burned in one of the public institutions destroyed in 1871. This loss did not, however, prevent his subsequent efforts for the amnesty. After the capitulation M. Blanc was elected to the National Assembly from the Department of the Seine. As a member of that body he opposed the nomination of M. Thiers for the Presidency of the Republic. During the sitting of the 16th of March he laid upon the table of the Assembly a bill to compel the members of the "Government of National Defence" to render an account of their political and military acts during their administration. This involved Gen. Trochu and his wonderful "plans"—for temporization chiefly! His last political office was deputy for the *Quartier des Écoles*. In the Chamber he always sat on the side of the "Extreme Left." Louis Blanc died somewhat unexpectedly at Cannes, on the 6th of December, 1882, whither he repaired temporarily for the benefit of his health.]

THE complete biography of Louis Blanc would require a bulky volume. Half a century of public life, crowding within itself so many events of great national importance—competing with so many illustrious men, already celebrated or entering upon the threshold of renown; boldly assailing so many weighty and formidable problems; sustaining his every effort with an author's talent of superior order; with the prestige of a spirited and exalted eloquence; with an austerity of patriotism, proof to the severest ordeals—certain it is we have here abundant material to fill a volume in which, at every step, the biography of the subject blends itself with the glory of France. But the grave difficulties in the way of presenting so much matter in so restricted a

compass, must be the writer's apology in this brief sketch. What especial topics called for development? What merely required casual mention? While, on the other hand, what could be passed over in silence? Logic is alone able to furnish the reply: To sum up briefly that which is already known; to treat of the general incidents at the end, confining ourselves to certain details of his inner life, more particularly those which have hitherto escaped the investigation of preceding biographers, and which offer the attraction of having never before been published—such is the plan we intend to follow.

Louis Blanc owes his Republican convictions to himself alone: in proof of which, suffice it to state that his grandfather, during the Great Revolution, was condemned as a Royalist, and met his death upon the scaffold; his father escaped the guillotine only through the devotion of a faithful servant.

From the marriage of Estelle Pozzo di Borgo with Jean Charles Blanc, who was Inspector-General under Joseph Bonaparte when King of Spain, two sons were born—Louis, the elder, at Madrid, October 29th, 1811; and Charles, at Castres, in 1813. Judging by the tenderness of affection they manifested for each other, one could easily have imagined them to be twins. Their hearts beat as one, and each was gifted with equally eminent though widely differing talents.

On the completion of the last act of the royal adventure in Spain, the father returned to France and settled in the neighborhood of Rouergue. At the age of seventeen Louis Blanc entered the College of Rodez—his brother Charles soon after following him—where both gained a brilliant reputation for scholarship in all its various branches.

They quitted college only to find their mother dead and their father financially ruined.

Thus the two young men were suddenly thrown upon their own resources. The struggle they were called upon to undergo was indeed a bitter one. Secluding themselves in a small apartment in the Hôtel du Nord, at Paris, these youthful explorers plunged together into the vast sea of Parisian life, the bottom of which is more thickly strewn with the stones of adversity than the pearls of success.

Louis Blanc, in lieu of something better to do, procured a few pupils in mathematics, an employment which rendered him but meagre maintenance. Very willingly, and with profit to themselves, the pupils accepted the limited accommodations of their master ; but the parents soon came to distrust the youthful preceptor. A "professor" of such childish appearance did not at all accord with the ideals of science and learning among these commonplace, practical folk, who appeared to look upon young Blanc as a precocious boy, strongly sympathetic withal, and better fitted to amuse than to instruct—more prone to inspire sentiments of protection for himself, than to impose authority upon others. This extreme juvenility in personal appearance, which persistently clung to him for many years after, on numerous subsequent occasions served to exercise a marked influence over the destinies of the future journalist, statesman, and orator.

But the modest professorship proving a thankless and anything but remunerative essay, Louis Blanc endeavored to gain the means of livelihood through various other channels. He was admitted, in the capacity of under clerk, to the law office of Maître Collot, Court Attorney—a position which he soon abandoned for the offer of a

tutorship in the family of M. Hallette at Arras. Here he remained for two years, during the whole of which time he devoted his leisure hours to the closest study.

It was at this period that he first attempted authorship. His earlier poetic ventures breathe the obligatory expressions of a valiant soul, such as, for example, "L'Hôtel des Invalides" and "Mirabeau." Afterward appeared his eulogy of "Manuel" in prose, for which he received a prize from the Academy of Arras; and, later still, a series of political papers, contributed to the *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais*.

The Rubicon was crossed—the gates of labor were thenceforth open to the student-workman! Already he realized the value of his mental forces, and lost no time in transferring them to an arena proportionate to their capacity. In 1834 Louis Blanc returned to Paris, certain, this time, that all preliminary obstacles to success had been removed from his pathway. And why was it not the case? Did he not carry in his pocket a very cordial letter of introduction from Fr. Degeorges to M. Conseil, the associate of Armand Carrel in the conduct of *The National*? That recommendation was of a nature to open to him at once the columns of the principal organ of the Opposition—with what result, it depended upon himself to prove.

Although M. Conseil received the young contributor to the *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais* most graciously, yet, for some unexplained reason, he neglected to present him to the editor-in-chief of *The National*.

Baffled at every step by M. Conseil, Louis Blanc, on quitting the office one day, saw placarded on the wall opposite the following announcement: "*Le Bon Sens*: a Political Daily Journal." Instantly an idea occurred to him—of seeking employment in the new quarter.

After all, what is life but a kind of lottery, where the strongest combinations often yield to the caprices of fate ! “ *Prenous toujours un billet, et arrive qui plante.* ”

Louis Blanc resolved to apply directly to the new journal, without any other introduction than that of an article showing what he was capable of doing.

At this time *Le Bon Sens* was conjointly conducted by two men, as widely different from each other as it is possible to imagine—the one, Cauchois-Lemaire, a shrewd sceptic, extremely defiant, and a Liberal of the school of Béranger ; the other, Rodde, of an open, hearty nature, an athlete in figure, and in deportment the most easy-going of men.

Louis Blanc found them together, and, as he timidly presented his article, Cauchois - Lemaire, with a half mocking smile upon his lips, carelessly remarked, “ But we already have more writers than we know what to do with.”

Considerably confused by a rebuff so grossly administered, Louis Blanc was turning to go, bitterly regretting the folly of having thus exposed himself to fresh disappointment, when, with a brusque gesture, Rodde recalled him, took the manuscript, and, glancing over it, exclaimed, “ Why, this is excellent ! did you really write it yourself ? ”

“ Certainly, monsieur ; and you shall soon see what I am capable of doing, if you will but give me the opportunity,” replied the young man.

“ Very well ; I will engage you, and I am quite sure Cauchois-Lemaire will thank me for it to-morrow.”

Note the significance of this turning point in the career of Louis Blanc ; for, in case of a refusal, he had fully determined to renounce journalism forever !

Rodde had only himself to congratulate for his suddenly inspired confidence. His journal thrived under the added ability of his industrious and vigorous young contributor, and the public, in its turn, speedily recognized the new and powerful element so fortunately acquired. Cauchois-Lemaire himself, in view of the result obtained, determined to make all honorable amends for the indifference he had at first manifested. One evening, at a reception given to the corps of editors of *Le Bon Sens*, Lemaire took the young journalist one side, and, after congratulating him warmly, announced that his salary, with the prospect of something better in the near future, had been raised to two thousand francs. The satisfaction thus voluntarily expressed was seriously kept, and soon demonstrated itself financially in round numbers.

Armand Carrel, of *The National*, lately so inaccessible, was struck by the brilliancy of the rising young journalist, and, knowing him only by name, requested of Louis Blanc a series of articles for his own journal, the subjects to be at the option of the writer.

The two men now met for the first time. Profiting by the publication of a work on the Eighteenth Century from the pen of Claudon, Louis Blanc had prepared a *critique* on the philosophers of that period, which he submitted for acceptance. M. Carrel proceeded to examine the manuscript. As he read his countenance darkened, and, indeed, from his own point of view, with good reason. Voltaire treated almost as an adversary to the Democracy! Rousseau exalted in the rôle of friend of the people! Carrel made no attempt to conceal his vexation. Throwing the half-perused manuscript down, he angrily exclaimed, "This shows what the youth of the present day are coming to!" He then launched forth in a torrent of invective, somewhat richer in ex-

pression than in argument. Louis Blanc was more than astonished. He waited calmly for the storm to pass over, and, seizing the first opportunity afforded him, quickly responded :

“ Pardon me, monsieur, but I have done my best. I regret that my opinions differ from your own. I bow to your better judgment.” Then, gathering up his manuscript, he turned to go.

“ No, no !” Carrel shouted after him ; “ you shall not escape me after that fashion : stay and defend yourself !”

Louis Blanc modestly proceeded to develop the historical and philosophical reasons upon which he had based his consideration of the subject. Carrel listened in silence, endeavoring to control his anger, at the same time closely following the logical conclusions of his youthful opponent. At length, suddenly rising to his feet, he said :

“ After all, there must be some honesty left in the world ! For myself, I am a soldier, and have had but little time to study these questions as they should be studied ; it is possible that you may be in the right !”

Such a declaration, made by so renowned a publicist to a young man at the *début* of his career, could not have failed to fill Louis Blanc with wonder. The magnanimity was as remarkable as it was unexpected. He repeated his excuses, and requested, as a favor, that he might be permitted to make a second trial, and on a different subject.

“ What !” exclaimed Carrel sharply ; “ would you have me believe that I have the right to refuse your article without a reasonable objection ? No, *parbleu !* it shall appear in *The National* to-morrow, and not one word of it shall be changed.”

After the retirement of Cauchois-Lemaire, Rodde remained in control of *Le Bon Sens*. But his days were already numbered. On his death-bed he held a long conference with M. Lefèvre, proprietor of the journal, during which he advised the latter to confide the future direction of the paper to Louis Blanc. The other members of the editorial staff were called on to give an opinion, and unanimously approved the choice of Rodde.

Nevertheless, M. Lefèvre was beset with doubts. An editor-in-chief, according to his idea of the subject, whatever might be his intellectual value, must also give satisfaction in other respects. He must represent the journal before the public individually, and Louis Blanc's personal appearance was altogether too boyishly unimpressive to command respect.

M. Lefèvre finally concluded to divide the editorial responsibility between Louis Blanc and M. Maillefer. In case of any conflict of opinion between the two editors, the other members of the staff would proceed, by vote, to decide upon the acceptance or rejection of contested articles.

The Lefèvre combination was destined to exercise, indirectly, it is true, a most baneful influence over an event which happened at this epoch. But for it a duel of the most painful character and disastrous result might never have taken place.

One recalls the famous innovation of M. Emile de Girardin, on the introduction of cheap newspapers. Notwithstanding M. de Girardin's business proposition was legitimately democratic and proper, resulting in an immediately assured success, it very naturally met with vigorous opposition from the established press, on that ever-sensitive point in human nature — self-interest.

Capo de Feuillide, one of the occasional contributors to *Le Bon Sens*, had prepared a venomous article attacking both the new journalistic movement and its chief promoter.

It is a remarkable fact that, during all his combative career, Louis Blanc always made it a rule of conduct to avoid personalities, no matter how great the provocation. His enemies entertained false ideas—at all events he considered them to be such—and the mere calling of hard names would have little to do with changing them. Therefore it was that he refused absolutely the publication of M. de Feuillide's article, which conflicted too strongly with his habits of moderation and courtesy.

On the other hand, Maillefer regarded journalistic methods from an opposite standpoint. He believed in personal warfare to the fullest extent of the Hibernian aphorism. Differing from Louis Blanc, even more widely on this subject than on many others, Maillefer approved the De Feuillide contribution, and insisted on its insertion.

Conformably to arrangement, the editorial staff, as a body, were called upon to decide the question. A majority of members siding with Maillefer, the article accordingly appeared.

Emile de Girardin at first contemplated prosecuting *Le Bon Sens* before the courts for defamation, whereupon Capo de Feuillide, in quest of influential adherents, had recourse to Armand Carrel. The latter, however, had not the slightest intention of involving himself in the difficulty. But, unhappily as it proved, Carrel recalled a certain romance written by De Feuillide on the massacres of the Midi, entitled "*Le Tourneur de Chaises*," preceded by a preface which, from beginning to end, was in eulogy of Emile de Girardin. Feeling himself

bound to assist a friend in so far as he was able without compromising himself personally, Carrel added a few words in praise of the novelist's production, and gave the preface a place in *The National*.

Girardin responded on the instant, declaring that he did not recognize in the observations addressed to himself, the loyalty "attributed" to the editor of *The National*. Provocation, a duel, and death followed in rapid succession. It is certain that, if Louis Blanc, in accordance with the dying wishes of Rodde, had been the sole director of the editorial administration of *Le Bon Sens*, this unfortunate quarrel, which resulted so disastrously for all concerned, would never have taken place.

The years, marked by unremitting labor for Louis Blanc, passed rapidly by. In 1838 we again find the restless journalist, in consequence of a disagreement with the proprietors of *Le Bon Sens* on the subject of railway franchise, quitting that journal and arranging for the publication of *La Revue de Progrès*. The cause of the Proletary appears to have been the prime motive for the establishment of the new vehicle of public opinion. MM. François Arago, Cormenin, David, and others were party to the council of supervision.

A year later Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte inflicted upon the public his "Idées Napoléoniennes." He reclaimed the heritage of his uncle, on condition of satisfying no claims upon the dynasty over and above its actual assets. Louis Blanc was first to take up the gauntlet. Patriotism and love of liberty have never been expressed in more ennobling language. "You propose to us," he exclaimed in conclusion, "that which was the trade of your uncle—WAR! Have a care, sir; this is despotism without glory!—royalty on our heads without Europe at our feet!—an Empire without an Emperor!"

A prophetic spirit seemed to hover above this sublime pleader in the cause of France ! *The fata morgana of Sedan was already looming in the mists of the distant future !*

Immediately following the above-mentioned polemic, a mysterious violent assault was made on the orator in the public streets of Paris. On the evening of the 19th of August, he was found, bruised and bleeding, in the rue Louis-le-Grand, where he had been beaten to unconsciousness and left upon the ground for dead.

When, but scarcely recovered from the injuries he sustained, Louis Blanc resumed the burden of his labors. The solution of the social problem was the end and aim of his endeavors. Will the majority of mankind be forever condemned to the implacable severity of this ceaseless struggle for existence ? Is there, then, no method of attenuating, if not suppressing, the misery of the race ? And, indeed, why should not some such method be found ? Admitting that it is an idea only, it is an idea well worthy the attention of thinkers everywhere. Come what may, the first step in the pathway of reform unquestionably leads to the suppression of hereditary governments and the establishment of free and enlightened republics.

In 1839 appeared Louis Blanc's first book, "L'Organisation du Travail." The subject to which the author confined himself was the amelioration of the condition of the so-called lower classes by means of free concourse and fraternal association. In order to arrive at such a state of affairs, Louis Blanc suggested a system of co-operation between reliable workmen and joint-stock companies, constituted by the state through the medium of a special budget, voted for that purpose, and to be directed by a newly created cabinet officer, to be known

as Minister of Labor. From the date of this proposition Louis Blanc was everywhere recognized as the advocate and friend of the workingmen.

La Revue du Progrès disappeared in 1840. The completion of a great study on contemporaneous events engaged the entire thought of Louis Blanc. In due course of time appeared the first volume of "L'Histoire de Dix Ans." The publication met with an unprecedented success, seven editions rapidly following each other without satisfying the demand, while Brussels and Leipsic were flooding the European market with reprinted copies.

There is no longer occasion to eulogize this great and in every way truly remarkable work. The civilized world has come to know it almost by heart. In short, "L'Histoire de Dix Ans" is crowded with valuable information, abounds in unforeseen revelations, depicting interior scenes so accurately that it would almost seem as if Gyges alone, with his talisman of invisibility, was capable of achieving the wonders it contains. This attraction explains its prodigious success from the publication of the first volume.

Every one quickly recognized the fact that they were dealing with an author of unimpeachable talent and integrity, and one who, in the coming future, would everywhere be acknowledged as such. Henceforth the author's chief embarrassment was one of choice only, in selecting from the enormous mass of information afforded him the best and most trustworthy details. His researches were rich in spoils. Information was solicited in the interest of historical verity—the history being in a great measure connected with the person interrogated. A refusal would not occasion the slightest hindrance to the continuation of the work. The author, on his part,

bound himself by no compact of restriction, preserving always full independence of judgment. But in every case his good faith was assured in advance, of which the book itself affords the most convincing proof.

This formula of proceeding never miscarried. With scarcely a single exception, all who were applied to responded with the best of grace, headed by M. Thiers, the most abundant purveyor of data, be it remarked, and followed by MM. Guizot, Dupont, Laffitte, d'Argout, Mortemart, Molé, and a host of others, who were flattered by the invitation to contribute their personal opinions in aid of the compilation of the work.

Even foreign countries awaited the publication of the succeeding volumes with an impatience scarcely less manifest than that of Paris and France. The last of the series followed close upon the appearance of the previous portions of the work in Germany and England.

The three years preceding his exile constitute a period in the life of Louis Blanc fully known to all, even in its minutest details—a life developed and intensified by the glare of publicity in which it was passed. The dictionaries of contemporaries, and many biographies have recorded all its prominent eventualities. It is hardly necessary, therefore, to recall its varied phases at this time. In 1846 he refused the honor of a nomination for deputy, tendered him by the Republican electors of Villefranche. His hour had not yet struck! A year later, at the time of the Reformist agitation, he delivered an address to the people of Dijon, in character both menacing and prophetic. This *début* of Louis Blanc as a political orator was equally successful with his efforts in other directions. The events of February followed. The Provisional Government was formed, of which

Louis Blanc, suddenly raised to power by popular acclamation, became a conspicuous figure.

To narrate all the details of the important political rôle he was called upon to sustain ; to picture the conferences he held at the Luxembourg, which at that period so forcibly directed public opinion in France ; to relate how he invited the people to the Palace, deserted by the Peers, in order to solve the difficult problem of their destinies ; to recall how he succeeded in abolishing capital punishment ; to designate the part taken by him in all the important measures presented by the Provisional Government ; and, finally, to characterize the use he made of his immense popularity—these are matters impossible to elaborate in the too narrow limits of so brief a sketch as this. Elsewhere they are to be found as part and parcel of contemporaneous history. But let me add, *en passant*, that such circumstances could not be recalled without exciting in the breasts of many feelings of mortal enmity toward Louis Blanc, and making him the prey of calumny, the traces of which even to-day are not wholly effaced. In proof of this, it was only lately that a Paris journal of extended circulation, and presumed influence, brazenly asserted that he advocated, in 1848, the project of national workshops, when, on the contrary, they were established in hatred of, and in order to combat, his influence with the people at large.

Those whom twenty years of the Empire have not rendered unfamiliar with the events of 1848, know perfectly well that no one was more opposed to the movement of the 15th of May than Louis Blanc ; that if, on that day, he undertook to speak in the invaded Assembly, it was at the earnest request of President Buchez, and solely for the purpose of calming an excited populace ; that if he was carried out in triumph by a

crowd of the invaders, it was done contrary to his remonstrances, and despite the appeal he incessantly uttered : " Unfortunate men ! you are destroying the Republic !" They also know, or ought to know, that when the Assembly, declaring dissolution, separated in the midst of the wildest confusion, Louis Blanc, pale, overcome by his exertion to free himself from the hands of the half-crazed mob, unable to stand or even to utter a word, summoned sufficient strength to trace these lines :

" In the name of the sovereignty of the people !—in the name of the word which can only be the instrument of your future enfranchisement !—I implore you to retire and leave the National Assembly to the liberty of its deliberations !"

It was the recapitulation of a speech he had addressed to the people from a window overlooking the Place de Bourgogne.

The reaction which immediately followed on the part of his alleged supporters shows very conclusively the real position of Louis Blanc at that period.

On the evening of the 15th of May, as he was entering the Assembly Chamber, he was recognized and set upon by a band of furious fanatics, who cried out, " Kill him ! kill him !" Most assuredly they would have carried their murderous intentions into execution, had not several of his colleagues rushed from their seats and forcibly rescued him from the hands of his would-be assassins. As it was, they had torn out locks of his hair, wrenched his arms, and, in his struggles, had inflicted several bayonet thrusts, which, by almost a miracle, had barely escaped his heart !

Who, of all those present on that memorable occasion, can have forgotten the appearance of Louis Blanc as he

ascended the tribune to testify in behalf of Barbès?—the clothing partially torn from his body, his face disfigured and bleeding! But the reaction must be met at any cost, and none the less must the evidence be given in order to determine the vote which, on the 13th of June, refused the Government authorization to prosecute.

But it was only a postponement of the question. After the bloody days of June it was found impossible to attain Louis Blanc, inasmuch as he never for one moment quitted the Chamber; hence the accusation, relative to the 15th of May, was again taken up, and influenced, doubtless, by the late desperate *émeute*, the Assembly reconsidered its previous action and voted the prosecution. The sitting having come to an end, many of Louis Blanc's friends crowded about him, demanding that he should seek immunity from arrest by instant flight. This he absolutely refused to do. M. Daragon, one of his hitherto bitterest political opponents, approached him and said:

“Monsieur, the evening I witnessed your escape from the hands of your would-be assassins, and saw you ascend the tribune to testify in behalf of your friend Barbès, I then vowed to you a friendship, the proof of which I now desire to make manifest. My carriage is at the door; if you have sufficient confidence in my honor, come!” Fearing to wound the magnanimity thus generously displayed, Louis Blanc accompanied M. Daragon, who made all the necessary arrangements for his departure. The reaction was successful, thus opening to the Republicans their only recourse—exile!

A fact which posterity will hardly credit may here be stated: *Louis Blanc's name was placarded on the posts of the pillory!* But through one of those sudden revulsions of feeling, for which the Parisians are particu-

larly distinguished, a crowd afterward overturned the ignominious post, and buried it from sight under a heap of flowers !

Louis Blanc hastened to the Belgian frontier, and finally sought and found refuge in London.

His protracted sojourn in the great English metropolis enabled him to carry into execution his life-long project of a history of the French Revolution. The earlier chapters of the work were abridged from a series of lectures, delivered in London and the leading cities of England, in the most correct and vigorous English, much to the surprise of the British public. He also contributed to the Paris *Temps* many articles on the politics, customs, and life of our neighbors over the Channel—contributions which, by the way, had much to do with the success of that able and admirable journal. What the French people had most to thank Louis Blanc for, however, was the dignity with which he upheld his country's flag throughout all his sad years of exile. It is needless to state that the most eminent representatives of English society accorded the French patriot, scholar, and statesman their warmest hospitalities.

A score of revolving years brings us to the fateful epoch of 1870. The delusive Empire vanished like a dream, and France, again unfettered, arose even in face of the terrible disaster that had broken her Imperial shackles. Louis Blanc hurried back to Paris to take his part in the hardships of the siege. How would he be received ? Chased away in days gone by, through the indifference of some and the maledictions of many, was he now forgotten by all ? Emphatically *No !* On the 31st of October he was offered power ! A *coup d'état*—and in the very presence of the enemy ! *Never !* At the first election he was chosen a member of the

National Assembly by the enormous vote of 216,471 souls !

The part which he subsequently took in the labors of the National Assembly is well known. No one can be ignorant of the ardor with which he opposed the system of compromise, respecting the adoption of the constitution of 1875, and if anything is needed to justify his position on that question, it may be found in the present anxiety everywhere manifested in France for a speedy revision of our present fundamental compact.

Louis Blanc never took part in, nor encouraged by any act of his own, the Commune. On the contrary, he looked upon the outbreak in Paris as a most calamitous scourge. He remained an advocate of conciliation and appeasement, for the advancement of which he so zealously maintained the project of amnesty, and undertook, at the end of the year 1879, a trip to the Midi, which was, for him, little else or less than a series of popular ovations.

From the time of the Senatorial elections, all the arrondissements of Paris tendered Louis Blanc their candidatures. He accepted but three, and was elected almost unanimously in each.

He continued to sit in the new, as he had done in the old, Assembly, never allowing a single question of importance to pass without treating it in the tribune with that wonderful oratorical power of which he was indeed a master. Faithful to his duties and his oath, he took no thought of himself nor of the strain put upon his physical powers, always delicate and already seriously undermined from the constant arduous labor of nearly half a century, until death claimed him for its own.

Two notable features will be wanting in this brief biography, if we neglect to mention the invariable and

absolutely disinterested characteristics which marked the career of Louis Blanc. Take up any of his writings, and you will be surprised to recognize in the man of to-day, the same peculiarities which distinguished him half a century ago. And as for his impartiality—was it not absolutely faultless ?

Louis Blanc never solicited place, nor courted public distinction. He even refused to be decorated ! His aspirations for a seat in the French Academy were directed more through the persuasion of his friend Victor Hugo, than from any self-seeking of his own. When the Republic triumphed, he claimed only the honor of having faithfully served her. His gentleness of character, the urbanity of his nature, his promptitude in aiding others, and his utter indifference to self, these few pages would never contain the examples of. Those who knew him—including the author of the present sketch, whom he so greatly honored by his friendship—are in a position to appreciate most fully the accuracy of the words of his regretted brother Charles, uttered in his last will and testament :

“ I give and bequeath by private right to my brother, Louis Blanc, *the noblest soul I have ever known*, the choice of three *objets d'art* among those of my collection.”

United in life, even death did not long separate them. Louis Blanc died at Cannes, December 6th, 1882. The splendid obsequies which, by virtue of a vote of the two Chambers, were solemnized in Paris at the cost of the state, will long be remembered.

CHARLES DE FREYCINET.

[CHARLES LOUIS DE SAULSES DE FREYCINET was born at Foix, Department of Ariège, November 14th, 1828. He received his professional training as an engineer in the Polytechnic School, was fourth in examination for the *Corps des Mines* in 1848, and was employed by the Government the same year on several important works. He was steadily promoted until, in 1855, he was stationed at Bordeaux. In that year the Railway Company of the South secured his services as chief engineer. During the following five years of his tenure of this important position, he gave to the "*Compagnie du Midi*" a typical organization, which the other railway companies did not fail to imitate. M. de Freycinet was next employed by the Government in various scientific or industrial missions in France and foreign countries. After the fall of the Empire he was appointed by Gambetta, then Minister of the Interior of the Government of National Defence, Prefect of Tarn-et-Garonne. On the 10th of October following, Gambetta, having also taken charge of the War Department, appointed M. de Freycinet as his delegate, and intrusted him with the supreme control of the department. On the conclusion of peace, M. de Freycinet retired from public life, but reappeared subsequently as a candidate for Senator for the Department of the Seine, January 30th, 1876, being placed first on the list of successful candidates. When the Dufaure Ministry was formed, in 1877, he was tendered and accepted the portfolio of Public Works. After the fall of the short-lived Gambetta Ministry, he became, at the request of President Grévy, chief of a new cabinet, which, in turn, was succeeded by the Ferry Ministry, still in power at the period of this writing.]

HE who attempts to write the biographies of living poets, painters, or sculptors—men who have won renown

through their talents in letters or in art—enjoys a tranquillity of mind truly enviable. The poet lives and breathes in his poem, the painter in his picture, the sculptor in his statue ; for the works which they may hereafter perform, be they creditable or otherwise, will not lessen the estimation already theirs. That which the artist has once done, and well done, is henceforth irrevocable. Every portion of his existence, and the genius which he has transfused in this marble, upon that canvas, or in those verses, has been there fixed forever ! The work may be excelled, but it can never change—it is final ! Go on, then, critic, historian, or biographer : *you* will never be betrayed by your subject !

Far different is it with him who would undertake to portray the life of the politician (*l'homme politique*) while he is yet living. It is little wonder if he trembles and turns pale over a task which, under the most favorable circumstances, can hardly be performed without blemishes. There is nothing so sufficiently well defined about a living political character that a biographer can positively accept for absolute certainty. Not only is the subject liable to change, but the surroundings also, based as they are upon events, situations, and fortune. Perspectives vary with every passing cloud, and political prejudices are hurled together like waterspouts upon the distant horizon. In a twinkling, behold the havoc of what was a moment before your completed portraiture !

Few public men exhibit greater contrasts in character than M. Charles de Freycinet. In the tribune and before political assemblages, explaining the provisions of a bill or some general plan of material improvement, he somewhat resembles M. Thiers, remarkable for the same clearness of mind, simplicity of expression, lucidity of argument, and natural persuasion—and all this without

the slightest display of effort. His speech proceeds directly from the heart; his thought rapidly diffuses itself in the minds of his hearers. Little by little, the auditory abandons itself to its influence, drifts along its calm, unruffled current, follows it, well pleased with the serenity of the prospect. Nevertheless, at the end, there are gulfs and chasms! The depths so tranquil conceal terrible surprises. Suddenly we are aground, stranded, lost! M. Thiers was accustomed to rescue us with bridges of some sort, but the inhospitable landing provided by M. de Freycinet is mud only!

From whatever standpoint we come to regard M. de Freycinet, no matter how or under what circumstances he may be approached, we cannot help experiencing doubt and uneasiness. Hence the perplexities of the critic who has a horror of apologies and disgust for pamphlets. He discovers that his stroke is not sufficiently penetrating and subtle to follow the windings of such hidden veins and covered muscles. Is it a body? Is it the shadow of a body? Is he a politician or a philosopher? a man of science or an idealist? As Shakespeare says:

“ . . . thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.”

Unfortunately, however, this character is at present in a period of eclipse! There have been other and more favorable opportunities for observation — immediately after the war of 1870, for example, or recently, succeeding the quadruple Senatorial elections in Paris, Montmartre, Perpignan, and the French Indies. As a political

illuminator M. de Freycinet was then at his full. And yet, with the reflected light falling vertically upon his face, there still rests upon it the steadfast shade of indecision. Impartiality suspends its judgment for the present: let us hope that the future historian may be able to solve the puzzle.

Descended from a family of mariners and scholars, M. de Freycinet (born at Foix, in the department of Ariège) was early in life destined to the pursuit of science. A pupil at the Polytechnic School, he graduated therefrom in 1848, and, after passing several years as state engineer, we find him at the age of twenty-eight at the head of the construction department of the railways of the Midi. In this position he remained during the following five years, proving himself an administrator of the first rank, gifted with an almost incomprehensible capacity for work, and with a wonderfully methodical bent of mind. The regulations still in vogue among the railways of the Midi are the work of his hand. It is asserted that he finally came to occupy too important a place in the company. At all events, for some reason best known to himself, he was constrained to tender his resignation.

These five years in the younger manhood of M. de Freycinet were fruitful in intellectual labor. It was during this time that he produced his "*Traité de Mécanique Rationnelle*," his "*Théorie Mathématique de la Dépense des Rampes de Chemins de Fer*," and especially his renowned work, "*Étude sur l'Analyse Infinitésimale, ou Essai sur la Métaphysique du Haut Calcul*," the second edition of which appeared during his interministerial vacation. He subsequently returned to the service of the state, which charged him with divers scientific and industrial missions both in France and abroad.

M. de Freycinet was engaged in his engineering studies when the war of 1870 broke out—the war so thoroughly prepared for by Prussia, and so foolishly declared by Napoleon III. This declaration brought in swift course the defeat of France, the ruin of the Second Empire, and the proclamation of the Third Republic. The latter was not anticipated by M. de Freycinet. Neither his personal inclinations nor his professional pursuits prompted him to espouse the cause of popular freedom. Nature appears to have designed him for an intelligent administrator, a trustworthy servitor under a Parliamentary Monarchy or a Constitutional Empire. Nevertheless he entertained no scruples in addressing himself directly to the Government of National Defence. He had a long interview with M. Gambetta, wherein he explained his general ideas respecting the material situation of the country, its available resources, and the ways and means of its rehabilitation. No doubt Gambetta was attracted by M. de Freycinet's way of putting things, no less than by his speech, which was so entirely at variance with his own. M. de Freycinet was then in his prime. His twenty years of active administration, together with his vast technical knowledge, gave to his opinions a certain dignity and weight. He had mastered the science of organization, and understood material affairs most thoroughly. Ever impulsive in judgment as in sentiment, Gambetta believed he had secured in his new-made acquaintance the force most needed in the then disorganized condition of the country. Which of the two was the more impressed by the other, it is difficult to say. The sacred fire, the master impulse, the dominating action, on the one side ; on the other, wise arrangement and a potent co-ordination of details. A ready sympathy quickly sprang up between them. The sharp contrasts

in their intellectual and vital temperaments only served to unite them still more closely. M. de Freycinet would no doubt have contributed his full share to this compact of friendship, but he was made to accept rather than bestow. Gambetta advanced with his customary heartiness, accepted without question De Freycinet's proffered services, and named his new friend Prefect of the Department of the Tarn-et-Garonne.

But M. de Freycinet could not long remain in the confines of a prefecture, no matter how important its local influence and political position might be, when all France was quivering in the delirium of war. Therefore it was that he hurried to meet the young "Dictator" on his arrival, "per balloon express," at Tours. Holding in his hands both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of War, Gambetta appointed M. de Freycinet his personal deputy (*délégué personnel*) in the War Department. This appointment was conferred on the 10th of October, 1870, and from that moment a constant collaboration was kept up day and night, in the midst of the most devouring cares and responsibilities that can well be imagined.

It was necessary to have witnessed this intimacy, this emulation of devotion and self-sacrifice for the country, not only between these men, but between many others, in order to do the subject justice. It was necessary to have been in the midst of this fiery furnace to have appreciated in the smallest degree the flame and lava of Vulcan's smithy, to enable one to say that such intimacies are sacred. It seemed almost a sacrilege to separate them now!

M. de Freycinet has explained in his book* many of

* "La Guerre en Province pendant le Siège de Paris."

the difficulties which the Government of Tours was forced to encounter, as well as the methods, sometimes bold and always ingenious, necessarily, employed in surmounting them. They had really nothing but the name of power, and with that nothing everything must be done !

The installment of the cabinet of minister was of itself a perplexing problem. A new army was to be created, the corps of engineering invented, the direction of infantry, artillery, intendance, medical service, and a thousand other necessities called for prompt and energetic action. In less than four months, however, the delegation succeeded in placing in the field six hundred thousand men ! “ I speak only,” says M. de Freycinet, “ of the men actually enrolled and placed in line, not those who remained in Algeria and in camps of instruction ; no more do I refer to the forces organized by our predecessors. This number of six hundred thousand men assembled in a period of one hundred and twenty days (from the 11th of October to the 9th of February), during which time the power remained to us, represents an average enrollment of five thousand men, or two regiments a day.”

Without doubt M. de Freycinet is justified in saying : “ *Quorum pars haud parva fui.*” Of all the collaborators of Gambetta, it is he who contributed most efficiently to the organization of the Provincial Government and to the general armament of the nation. He had the technical knowledge indispensable in the solution of a great number of special problems, a methodical mind, wonderful activity, a certain rational, indomitable tenacity of purpose, characteristic of scientific training. The plan of the campaign of the East was, for the most part, his own.

Thus it is that he came to occupy a place, and a prominent one, in the history of the Government of National Defence. He was one of the most substantial elements of the obstinacy of France in the face of misfortune. Neither envy, his own mistakes, nor his political fluctuations, can ever deprive him of this credit, justly his due. By such acts he is placed, so to speak, above himself; one portion of his life at least is definitively recorded. A record such as this suffices to honor the man. It challenges recognition and commands respect. It rejoices us to-day to assert that the politician ought never to be finally estimated until he has passed from the arena of contemporaneous events.

After the armistice, M. de Freycinet retired from public affairs in company with M. Gambetta. The succeeding five years were passed in the study of his profession. His name suddenly reappeared during the Senatorial campaign of 1876. He was elected Senator for the Seine, together with MM. Hérold and Tolain, receiving 142 votes—the highest number of any candidate upon the list. He had been careful, and sincerely so, to place his name far below those of two other and more illustrious competitors—Victor Hugo and Louis Blanc. He bestowed upon Gambetta the names of “friend” and “master.” The electors of Paris, sensible as the Athenians of that good grace which is also a virtue, accorded him the first rank from the outset. “Gentlemen,” he said to them, “I have greater need of explaining my position than some others. I do not possess conditions for service which speak for themselves, and which constitute a pledge of good faith to the Democracy—at least in no degree comparable with the record of the other candidates now before you. Above all, I have not—like the glorious delegate Paris has

given to France, and whose candidacy you have just acclaimed—a brilliant past, and that immortal protestation of twenty years which has given to the world the spectacle of a faith and perseverance that nothing can overthrow. No ! *my* past is only a modest one, dating from 1870.”

Nevertheless he acknowledged (and in what distinct and measured terms !) a certain secret tendency of conscience which had inclined him for a long time toward the Republic. This was admirably calculated to touch the hearts of the Parisian Democracy. M. de Freycinet, continuing his speech, identified his cause with that of the National Defence, asserted the necessity of avenging the wrongs to which they had been subjected for five years, and, in closing, made use of the following language, which carried the electors by storm : “ If I came late to the Republic, I entered it through its loftiest portal, and have received the baptism, not of water, but of fire ! For it was in the veritable fiery furnace of the Government of National Defence that for five long trying months I struggled for the country with my whole heart, my best faculties, and my utmost powers. That which I succeeded in accomplishing is not for *me* to say ; but my friend and master, M. Gambetta, will bear witness * that I fulfilled my duties to their fullest entirety. This National Defence has been the motive for the candidature I now place before you. For five years outraged, maligned, and shamelessly falsified, the Government of National Defence seeks reparation, and Paris alone is able to accord it.”

Finally, in order to crown this master-stroke, in which every word told especially in the interest of the candi-

* The eloquent witness invoked was there present.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

date, M. de Freycinet concluded with this memorable peroration :

“ The Democracy stands in need of diverse representation. Alongside of the brilliant geniuses who point humanity to the future, should be the patient workers, detailed to clear the ground and shape the way. Alongside of the gifted precursors, should be men capable of solving the problems of organization and administration, which must necessarily arise from the adoption and application of new ideas. *I* shall be one of those men, and, to sum up briefly, I ask for nothing more than to be enrolled by you in the scientific phalanx of the Republic.”

This speech of M. de Freycinet should be read and re-read if one desires to arrive at anything approximating the real character of the man. In it will be found the secret of his wonderful success, and, upon closer inspection, the germ, also, of a certain inclination that may become dangerous—the inclination to repose too great a confidence in shrewdness alone, and to abuse it unwittingly !

M. de Freycinet rapidly acquired influence in the Senate. Reporter of the Law on Administration of the Army (November, 1876), he explained in the clearest manner possible every detail of the new system. From that day he has been looked upon by many as a statesman of the first rank, and an orator of no mean order. But one more occasion was needed to insure him a place in the Government.

That occasion presented itself on the 14th of December, 1877, when the pressure of public opinion and the energy of Republican defenders succeeded in saving the constitution from the perils which threatened it, by imposing upon the Marshal-President the Dufaure-

Waddington Ministry, in which M. de Freycinet was named Minister of Public Works.

At this time the various portfolios were strictly limited, and M. de Freycinet's came under the head of "special." Beside MM. Dufaure, Waddington, and Léon Say, the ministerial débutant was entirely eclipsed. But it was not long before (thanks to his potent faculties of assimilation and incessant activity !) he was seen to enlarge his sphere of action and pass almost to the top-most surface. Scarcely installed, he arrested public opinion, and the attention of the Chambers as well, by a project of extension and improvement of our public highway system, which at once excited a heated controversy. He proposed the construction of new railway lines within the coming decade, at an estimated cost of three milliards of francs, and canals at the further expenditure of another milliard ! He demonstrated that this gigantic undertaking was not only possible, but could easily be accomplished ! M. Léon Say was drawn over, little by little, to the views of his enthusiastic colleague, and finally became a confirmed convert. On the 7th of March the project was laid before the Assembly, which accepted it by no inconsiderable majority, and a few days later the Minister of Public Works was voted a first installment of three hundred and thirty million francs ! M. de Freycinet awoke to the discovery of fame sure enough !

During the parliamentary vacancies M. de Freycinet, accompanied by M. Léon Say, visited the departments of the North and South-West. He inspected the extensive works on the English Channel and the Atlantic. He explained his project, and explained his explanations, at Havre, at Boulogne-sur-Mer, at Dunkerque, at Bordeaux, at Saint-Nazaire and at La Rochelle. Public

credulity favored him. The rank and file of the populace applauded this ideal of peace, prosperity, and plenty, so grandly unfolded by the man who, if not the inventor of gunpowder, was unquestionably the forerunner of an unexampled and unexpected material millennium. That hilariously glorious year of 1878 was for M. de Freycinet a sort of *lune de miel*—his political honeymoon !

When M. Jules Grévy was elected President of the Republic, and M. Dufaure had tendered his resignation, M. de Freycinet was retained in the Waddington Cabinet. He still continued Minister of Public Works, but the sphere of his official prerogatives was greatly enlarged. He was no longer a “specialist ;” he had blossomed into statesmanship ! Until then he had shut himself up in the bastion of his Public Works ; from thence he promptly issued forth and plunged headlong into the maelstrom of general politics. Fortune was faithful ever ! By a skilful manœuvre he seized the most fitting occasion to bring to the notice of the Senate a project for the transfer of the seat of government to Paris.

One cannot fail to recognize a very decided method in all of M. de Freycinet’s political movements. During the ten years, from 1870 to 1880, he does not seem to have taken a single false step to his own personal prejudice. He has known how to practice two virtues absolutely essential to successful policy—supreme patience and decisive action at a propitious moment. M. Waddington was forced by resistless public opinion to follow M. Dufaure into retirement, and then it was that M. de Freycinet’s lucky star rained long-expected fortune on him. He was charged to form a Ministry ! President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs,

M. de Freycinet this time directed the political policy of the nation. His first thought was to form a Ministry composed of the most moderate of the Moderate Republicans, and the most extreme of the Extremists. This, it seems, was his favorite political conception! Here reappears once more the chimerical trait of his purely scientific mind. He willingly sacrificed solidity to tenure in office. He developed without precaution beyond natural limitation. He was too ready to leave the sure point, the faithful support in which he would be solidly sustained, in order to chase after new adventures and impossible conquests!

As Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. de Freycinet addressed to the representatives of France in foreign countries a long circular, admirably prescribed, in which he passed in review all the leading questions pending since the Congress at Berlin. In relation to the Egyptian question he said: "For the English, that country is the route to India; that is to say, that a superior necessity compels them to watch over this highway for the security of their communications. For us, Egypt is a land once watered by French blood, teeming to-day with our capital, enriched through products which contribute to our traffic in the Mediterranean, constituting a necessary market for our industrial and commercial activity, and attaching to France, as a whole, traditions that we could not permit to be jeopardized without reflection upon our national pride."

President of the Council and chief of the home department, M. de Freycinet found himself confronted by two questions, rendered extremely difficult on account of the antagonism they excited in both Chambers: the question of Plenary Amnesty, and that in relation to religious societies. M. Louis Blanc had deposed the former

on the 22d of January. M. de Freycinet energetically opposed it. "When this question," he said, "shall have ceased to be an instrument of agitation in the hands of parties, and when the majority shall accord to the Government an incontestable moral support, then the question of amnesty will become a more appropriate measure."

Nevertheless, as the national festival of the 14th of July approached, the Republican party desired to honor the occasion by some grand act of pacification. Gambetta pleaded the cause of immediate amnesty with a power and ardor that won over to the support of the measure many who had heretofore remained undecided—among them M. de Freycinet himself. Its adoption shortly followed.

The question of religious societies, to which the Chamber wished to apply "existing laws," after the rejection of the famous "Article Seven," was far from taking so happy a turn. It is well known that M. de Freycinet's habitual shrewdness suggested the idea of two decrees of the 29th of March, one of which called for the absolute dispersion of the "Society of Jesus," and was, as has been said, a sort of *non possumus laïque*; the other offering to non-authorized societies of men and women governmental protection, provided that such should demand a legal recognition. The elasticity of this second decree, which readily lent itself to various interpretations, and the desire of M. de Freycinet to use it with extreme moderation, when Democratic opinion was strongly manifested toward the clericals, combined to produce the rock upon which the De Freycinet Ministry split and went down on the 18th of September, 1880.

History *may* reveal the motive which induced M. de Freycinet to decline a place in the Gambetta Ministry,

to which he was so naturally called, and why he so promptly accepted the succession of the great statesman whom he had previously claimed as his "friend" and "master."

We submit this uncertain page to the judgment of the future !

It cannot fail to be recognized from the present standpoint that the second brief Ministry of M. de Freycinet was coincident with the displacement of the parliamentary majority and general enfeeblement of Republican politics, carrying with it no inconsiderable loss of French prestige on the southern borders of the Mediterranean—a result which the purely scientific premier had formerly alluded to as an exposure to jeopardy, "striking at one of the sources of our national grandeur."

It is singular, truly, that, with his well-known reputation as an organizer, M. de Freycinet has succeeded in leaving behind him so much disorganization !

Has M. de Freycinet mistaken his destiny ? Was this clever mind developed beyond its true proportion during this latter period by personal disaster, which he found impossible to avoid ? Let it not be forgotten that in these revolutionary days men are neither completely saved nor completely lost ; and in the sphere which befits him best, with the acknowledged faculties certainly his own, M. de Freycinet may again be of service to the country which, in the past, has honored him without question and without stint.

VICTOR HUGO.

[VICTOR MARIE, VICOMTE HUGO, was born February 26th, 1802, at Besançon, where his father, General Hugo, was then commandant of the garrison. His mother was a native of the Vendée, and from her he imbibed romantic royalist sentiments, although his father was a most devoted follower of Napoleon. His youth was spent partly with his mother in Paris, partly in Italy and Spain, where General Hugo held high appointments. When a mere child his father took him to the court of King Joseph Bonaparte, at Madrid, where he joined the seminary of nobles with the intention of becoming a page at the Royal Palace. The "Napoleonic Idea" proving a disastrous failure in the Peninsula, Madame Hugo returned to Paris with her two sons and placed them under the care of the same clergyman who had previously instructed them. On the fall of the Empire a separation took place between General Hugo and his wife, and young Victor commenced his classical studies in company with his brother Eugene, and a young girl who afterward became his wife. He early acquired distinction through his poetic effusions, and, before he was thirty years of age, his published works were numerous and his name had become famous. Shortly before the political revolution of 1830, a literary revolution took place in France, at the head of which was Victor Hugo. A band of young men, imaginative, ardent, and confident, sought to renovate French literature by departing from purely classic rules and models, substituting a varied and very irregular verse for the monotonous Alexandrines of the old school, and making art strictly conform to nature—an attempt which they carried to such an extent as to bring into prominence very disagreeable things which the world at large would much rather have kept out of sight. This new school ("*La Jeune France*," as they called themselves) formed the "Romanticists," and their opponents the "Classicists" of that

day. This literary war lasted for several years, and was waged with much bitterness on both sides. In 1832 the ministry interdicted one of Victor Hugo's dramas (*"Roi s'Amuse"*), but his popularity continued to increase. In 1837 King Louis-Philippe made him an officer of the Legion of Honor, and in 1845 a Peer of France. After the revolution of 1848 he was elected to represent Paris in both the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, where he espoused the most ultra democratic principles. He was subsequently banished by Louis Napoleon for life. In 1852 he assailed the Emperor most mercilessly in a political pamphlet, entitled "*Napoléon le Petit*," the next year in the "*Châtiments*"—a series of poems written with great *verve* and in the same spirit. In the mean time he had taken up his residence in the Island of Jersey, subsequently removing to Guernsey, where he occupied for many years the "Hauteville House." He absolutely refused to accept the amnesty of 1859, preferring the solitude of his island home to the riotous Imperial *régime* of Paris. During these years he pursued his literary labors with great avidity and perseverance. A list of his principal works, written in exile, will be found in M. Claretie's biographical sketch. After the fall of the Second Empire and the proclamation of the Republic, he immediately set out for Paris in fulfilment of his old-time promise, "When liberty returns, *I* will return." The ovation which awaited his arrival was something unprecedented even in France. In February, 1871, he was elected one of the forty-three representatives of Paris in the National Assembly. He there vehemently opposed the treaty of peace with Germany. This aroused against him the anger of the party of the "Right," and on March 8th, when he attempted to address the Assembly, the opposition was so great that he left the tribune and immediately resigned his seat. In 1877, on the eve of an anticipated *coup d'état* by Marshal MacMahon, then President of the Republic, he gave to the public his "*Histoire d'un Crime*," with the following introductory line: "This book is more than in order: it is urgent: I publish it!" The volume is divided into three parts: 1. The Massacre; 2. The Victory; 3. The Downfall; and in the last the poet recounts the disaster at Sedan under the sub-heading of "Epilogue." Its effect on the country and elections was tremendous. The ministry of Marshal MacMahon resolved to demand authority to prosecute the author for seditious utter-

ances. The Duke D'Audiffret-Pasquier opposed it, and the events which followed fully justified the object of the work. Victor Hugo is now a member of the Senate, but rarely takes part in its proceedings or attends its meetings. The popular demonstrations in 1881, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, were sufficiently zealous and universal to recall Voltaire's last reception in Paris.]

A GRAND reception room, brilliantly illuminated ! Sounds of festivities break upon the ear in a confused murmur, drowning the individual voices of a distinguished assembly, composed almost entirely of those who, in letters, art, and science, on the stage or in the journals, all in their special vocations, have added imperishable lustre to the French name. At the seat of honor sits an aged man, robust and white-haired. All eyes are fixed upon him—to him all the enthusiasm is due. At a given signal the festive sounds are hushed, and a charmed silence falls upon the gathered guests. A man rises in his place beside the honored one—a man who is himself greatly renowned in France. Émile Augier lifts his brimming glass in salutation, and in a clear, ringing voice pledges a toast to him whom he respectfully designates as “*Le Père*.”

It is the banquet given in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the production of “Hernani,” and, on this occasion, Victor Hugo, its author, has the proud satisfaction of beholding the foremost representatives of cultured France at his feet !

Regard this spectacle for an instant. Without, beneath the gray February sky, an entire populace defiles before the windows. Snowy locks mingle with bright young tresses, along the stream of men, women, and children, who pass in procession through the Avenue d'Eylau, saluting the “Master,” now just entering upon

his eightieth year. It is no longer the father of our modern literature—it is the Ancestor of the whole city (and what a city!) of Paris, that an entire nation, as well as many distinguished participants from abroad, have congregated to honor. Wave follows wave, banners succeed banners, wreaths are heaped upon wreaths, amid the thunder of huzzas and the incessant storm of plaudits. From noon till twilight Victor Hugo has stood at his casement, regarding the immense cortege which acclaims him *Ave Poeta!*

It is the birthday of the poet, and filing before him is that France which struggles and conquers! Living, he has entered (as some one has most fittingly said) into immortality! The banquet of “Hernani” was the glorification of the *élite*; the *fête* of February, 1881, the apotheosis of the multitude!

How can such a man be portrayed? I have just written, “He is the Master.” One does not question a master—he salutes him! At the hour of twilight the mountain-tops are still roseate with the beams of the setting sun. When we look about us in France, in this saddened century now drawing to a close, and take note of the lengthening shadows, it suffices us to regard this light, this snow-crowned summit, still illumined by the reflection of an aurora.

Victor Hugo still reflects the passions, the dreams, the hopes and the fervor of the Nineteenth Century. He set out from the Vendéan royalty to reach the Republic of Athens, with the principles of social emancipation added to the passion of liberty and art. His fluctuations have been those underlying public opinion from 1815 to 1882, and he has superbly incarnated for the future two ideas of general emancipation—in literature, the revolt against convention in the name of truth; in politics,

protestation in the name of right ! Twin virtues these, which led him both to glory and exile. But one day, at length delivered from exile, he returned to find at Paris an increase of glory. What *souvenirs* !—dating already from twelve bygone years !

I was in company with the author of the “*Légende des Siècles*” on his return to France. Monday, the 5th of September, 1870, the very day after the fall of the Empire, Victor Hugo, then at Brussels, presented himself at the gate of the railway station, and demanded, in a voice tremulous with emotion, *a ticket for Paris* ! In my mind’s eye I still behold him !

Upon quitting the battle-field of Sedan, I had repaired to Brussels, there to await the final result of the disaster. My anxiety on that feverish 4th of September can readily be understood. In the evening, after the news of the proclamation of the Republic had reached us, it was reported that Victor Hugo would leave the following day for Paris. A voluntary exile since the amnesty, he had remained outside of France in conformity to his declaration, “When liberty returns, I will return.”

France, after twenty years of enforced slavish obedience to the Empire, was at last apparently restored to herself. It was no longer her liberty but her integrity which was menaced. Victor Hugo could now return in honorable compliance with his vow !

Not a single detail in the events of that memorable day has escaped my memory !

On that 5th of September, Victor Hugo, wearing a soft felt hat, and carrying a small satchel in his hand, his face pale, showing only too plainly his emotion, instinctively consulted his watch as he approached the ticket office of the railway station. It appeared as though he wished to ascertain the exact hour which

should terminate his proscription. So long a time—nineteen weary years!—had passed since he was forced to flee the city which he loved, and in which centred all his hopes, his ambition, his life!

Now all was over! It was no longer by years and months, but by hours and minutes, that he reckoned the time which separated him from France and Paris!

A number of faithful friends were at the station, some of whom purposed accompanying the returning exile to the home of his triumphs and his love. The train departed, and Victor Hugo was seated opposite to us in the same *coupé*, his face turned to the window, intently regarding the horizon, anxiously awaiting the moment when the frontier should be crossed, and he could gaze once more upon the fields, the trees, the very heaven of his beloved France!

No, never shall I forget the profoundly distressing impression which the sight of the first French soldier produced upon this man—his hair blanched in exile and already in his sixty-ninth year. It was at Laudrecies. The troops of General Vinoy's corps, which had beaten a retreat from Mézières—wearied, harassed men, besmeared with dust and powder, pale, disheartened, vanquished even before they had engaged in battle—were stretched upon ground along the railway line. They were fleeing from the pursuing Uhlans. They had fallen back to escape being swallowed up in the disaster of Sedan! Defeat was stamped upon the countenances of the men, mental dejection in their physical attitudes, despair in their downcast eyes; brave men they were and valiant, but tossed by the hurricane of war like pebbles before the storm.

Suddenly the gloomy eyes of Victor Hugo filled with

tears, and, leaning far out of the carriage door, he shouted :

“ *Vive la France ! vive l’armée Française ! vive la Patrie !* ”

The soldiers regarded him with a puzzled, despondent air, scarcely comprehending the old man’s excited cry.

He continued to pour forth his encouraging words and cheers—fervid utterances, patriotic outbursts ! “ No ! no ! ” he cried, “ it is not *your* fault ! *You* have done your duty nobly and well ! ”

Tears choked his utterance as the train moved onward, and his venerable white head sunk upon his breast.

He had cherished until now the proud illusion that France was invincible. Himself the son of a soldier, he had believed that the soldiers of his country were eternally wedded to glory. Patriotic in the highest degree, he had assigned France the foremost place in the military prowess of nations. In a moment—almost in the twinkling of an eye—his highest expectations had been shattered, his fondest dreams had vanished into thin air ! We heard him murmur, in accents deeply fraught with suffering, “ Would to God I had never again seen France, if I must look upon her torn, distracted, divided, reduced to what she was in the days of Louis XIII. ”

More than eleven years have passed since that memorable day of gloom, and I can yet see as distinctly as though it occurred but yesterday, those heroic tears that gushed like blood from a wound in the inmost depths of his patriotic heart.

Victor Hugo (and it is one of the glories of his genius !) is profoundly, ardently, intensely a French patriot, even if he himself has saluted the United States

as the country of future society. But his admiration for that great and overshadowing Republic, so often the subject of his dreams, can never diminish his soul's adoration for the circumscribed land of his birth and love!

"Patriot" is indeed a fitting title for Victor Hugo. Such he was already when, a mere child, he clung to the saddle of his father, General Hugo, when he galloped across conquered Spain. Such he is to-day, after four-score years of trial and suffering. His love for the people, at once tender and profound, is, as he himself asserts, never separated from his love of country.

Humanity is his goddess, but the country is his mother! When France was delivered up to Prussian occupation, when Verdun, the last city invested, was evacuated, what poet-voice was heard throughout the country, speaking words of consolation, of hope, of undaunted courage? Was it a voice from among those young men, touched with poetic fervor and fire? Was it a man of our own generation, rising above despondency and doubt? No! it was Victor Hugo, the "Master" of those who sing his praises to-day, but who then sung not of country nor of hope. The Anacreons of Parnassus left the cry of enfranchisement to this septuagenarian Tyrtœus, who clung to the soil as vigorously as the oak of ancient Gaul!

The physiognomy of Victor Hugo is indicative of marked resolution and great force of character. His motto in all things might justly be "*Robur*." He has broad shoulders, sinewy muscles, and a massive head. His face, pensive and sombre, is no longer smooth shaven, as represented by David (of Angers) some years since in almost breathing marble, but bearded and venerable—a kind of idealized Homer! This likeness

will remain forever the most popular, to my thinking, because it better expresses the vigorous militant genius of the man. The ocean breezes have bronzed his cheeks to a healthy hue. His thick, snow-white hair is pushed back from a broad, shining forehead, beneath which bright blue eyes glow with passion or sparkle with wit. He speaks in a guttural voice, well toned, but slightly sharp. Like all Frenchmen, he is much addicted to gesticulation, but in his case the gestures are refined and expressive, with a touch of the manner peculiar to the French gentry of a former generation—a certain characteristic born of just pride, a good grace joined to genius, a great charm in a truly great man. Such is Victor Hugo, when receiving his guests, conversing on his literary *souvenirs*, or playing with his grandchildren.

The two grandchildren, already mentioned, are the little son and daughter of his deceased son, Charles Hugo, and with both beside him, they serve as a kind of frame wherein the snowy locks and sympathetic smile of their grandsire are displayed still more majestically by contrast.

Between the boy George and his sister Jeanne the *grand-père* seems rejuvenated, encircled, so to speak, with an infantile aureole of ardent life and spirits. What painter could possibly reproduce so wonderful an antithesis—this intellectual giant in his old age, surrounded by the luminous grace of childhood! Their fresh laugh responds to the questionings of the grandparent, who in their childish prattle they still call “papapa” (the superlative of papa).

The poet always loved children. The smiles of his own little ones have often calmed his anger and consoled his sadness. “You are all my poesy,” he used to say to his sons.

Victor Hugo has sung better than all others the theme of these awakening souls and unfolding flowers of earth—the children. He is the poet of the country, victorious or vanquished ; the poet of the warrior in combat or the soldier in dying ; and he has celebrated in resounding verse the legends which he desired, later on, to adapt to humanity. He is the poet of color, in “*Les Orientals*,” where he appears like a sower of rubies and carbuncles ; he is the poet of profound good-will, of loyal love, in “*Les Feuilles d’Automne* ;” he is the poet of revery in “*Les Contemplations* ;” there is grandeur in “*Hernani* ;” pity breathes in every line of “*Les Pauvres Gens* ;” tenderness and sacrifice in “*Les Travailleurs de la Mer* ;” military glory in “*Quatre-vingt-treize* ;” but, far above all the poetic dreams he has expressed, painted, or sung, has he immortalized eternal youth in “*L’Enfant*.” Still another master-stroke in his immense work, taking a place alongside the ideal accumulations of “*Les Misérables*,” the Castilian pride of “*Ruy Blas*,” the terror of “*Lucretia Borgia*,” the grandeur of “*Notre-Dame*,” the sufferings of “*Marion*,” the sombre shadow of “*Charles Quint*,” the martyrdom of “*Gilliatt*,” is the powerful “*L’Année Terrible*,” in which Gros-Alain and his two companions are depicted in the red fire of the Tourgue !

Victor Hugo’s grandchildren are fast growing beyond their childhood, and ere-long one of them will be a man, bearing the great name of George Hugo, and the other a blooming young woman. At present they are the poet’s one consolation of the past. Those who have gone before him still live in his immortal pages of “*Mes Fils*.” Notwithstanding the numerous family afflictions that have fallen to his lot, he has managed to find a solace for his many griefs in work, constant and unremitting. “*Not a day without a line*,” is the *mot*

d'ordre of his life. At his villa in the Avenue d'Eylau (I am mistaken, curiously enough, since it was myself who requested that this avenue be rechristened "Victor Hugo!") he is up at work by six in the morning. At eleven he breakfasts in company with his family. He comes and goes. Formerly, it was his delight to promenade in the gardens of the Tuileries, and amuse himself watching the children digging in the sand. But now the Tuileries are too far away, and he spends a portion of the morning in his own garden, after which he repairs to the Senate. He loves the Senate, which in him has always found a vigorous defender.

In his personal indulgences Victor Hugo is extremely abstemious. "In all my life, which has been a long one," he once remarked to a friend, "I have never drunk the measure of a Bordeaux glass of alcohol."

His method of work is somewhat peculiar. When sudden ideas suggest themselves, he immediately jots them down in the form of notes: these he calls his "*copeaux*." There are the "*copeaux de jour*" and the "*copeaux de nuit*." He frequently passes wakeful nights, during which he composes in the dark, committing to paper the crowding thoughts that possess his brain; with the coming day a single letter or pencil mark is sufficient to recall the thoughts therein indicated. Of these "*copeaux*," including notes, impressions, *souvenirs*, written in small note-books, there are the *nuclei* of several volumes which might be entitled, "Victor Hugo from Day to Day." They are the very crumbs of genius!

Physically, Victor Hugo has been remarkably gifted. Gustave Planche has written that his power of vision was such that, from the top of the towers of Notre-Dame, he could readily recognize a friend passing in the street below! He is something of a fanatic withal

on the subject of hygiene. How often, in midwinter, have we seen him through the open windows of his house in the rue Pigalle, divested of his outer garments and regardless of the lack of fire, busily at work during the chilling morning hours ! He composed "Notre-Dame de Paris" during a severely cold season, with a fire in the grate, it is true, but with the windows of his study wide open to the stinging wintry blasts. Robust and unluxurious, he sleeps from choice on a small iron bedstead, and almost as hard a mattress, not unlike the Emperor of Germany in his château of Babelsberg.

To-day, notwithstanding his weary years of exile, the poet recalls with emotion, almost regretful in its tenor, the Hauteville House at Guernsey, which tourists now visit as the principal object of interest in the island. "I used to sleep there like a child," he is accustomed to say, as if he still heard beneath the casements of his lonely dwelling the soothing lullaby of the sea !

At the Hauteville House, the inscriptions composed by him and worthy of the school of Salerne, alternate with precepts which recall sometimes the energetic speech of "Agrippa d'Aubigne," sometimes the text of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

I have preserved two of these epigrams :

"Lever à six, dîner à dix,
Souper à six, coucher à dix,
Fait vivre l'homme dix fois dix."

(Arise at six, dine at ten,
Sup at six, to-bed at ten,
Will make a man live ten-times-ten !)

"L'esprit souffle où il veut,
L'honneur va où il doit."

(The spirit breathes where it wills :
Honor goes where it should.)

The library of the Hauteville House for a long time contained the autographic mss. of Victor Hugo, which M. Paul Meurice has recently brought back to collate and add to the "Œuvres Complètes." I have turned over the leaves of these mss., one after the other, in utter wonderment, like one in a dream. At Guernsey they had slept for a period of years in an immense armoire. The manuscript of "Hernani," of "Châtiments" and of "Bug-Jargal!" To inspect them, to hold them in one's hand—there is something absolutely touching in such a privilege! On a certain occasion the artist Gleyre, passing his hand over a drawing by Raphael, remarked, "There he has placed his hand—his fingers have touched this paper!" It is something near akin to this idealistic thrill that one experiences on beholding these world-renowned papers—memoranda which to-day are immortal books!

M. Paul Meurice brought them back to France in one of those English metal trunks which was doubtless predestined to become a literary conveyance, since it bore the name of "Waverley." The manuscripts have each a different aspect: some of them have remained simply in sheets, not even bound together, as, for example, that of "Hernani;" others which a bookbinder of Guernsey has covered in parchment, with the title in large red letters, like that of "Roi s'Amuse." Some of them are illustrated by Victor Hugo himself, prominent among which is "Les Travailleurs de la Mer," where the powerful fancy of the writer has lavished, beside the written pages, numerous sketches of sea scenes, views of old Guernsey, extraordinary for its gables and denticulations, figures of gnomes of romance, typical sailors, ocean studies, visions of tempests—all surprisingly fantastic and of strange naturalism.

The manuscript of "Hernani" is a *cahier* of large-size linen paper, yellow with age and covered with small, close writing. In "Les Repentirs" there are many erasures. The present publishers have restored more than one. This original manuscript bears on the first page the Spanish epigraph: "Tres para una." Every act is dated from the beginning to the end. The first was begun August 29th, 1829; the second, September 3d, terminating on the 6th of the same month; the third, September 8th, terminating on the 14th; the fourth, September 15th, terminating on the 20th, and the fifth, September 21st, finished on the 25th.

To the acts not numbered were given special letters, thus—*a, b, c, d, and e*. The paper is covered with the annotations and addresses of friends, as, for example, "Alphonse Rayer, rue Neuve-de-la-Ferme, 16 au-dessus de l'entresol." Sketches: The double-headed Imperial eagle, with an escutcheon on its breast, bearing this legend, "*A la place du cœur il a son écusson!*"

There are also historical notes, embracing information necessary to the production, in order to impart a local coloring. Victor Hugo was in the habit of jotting down his memoranda upon the margin of the piece he might at the moment be engaged on. They are very *spirituel*, and the sketches accompanying them exceedingly picturesque. On the margin of the "Hernani" manuscript is a sentiment which has a peculiar personal significance, showing the thought, in 1829, of the future author of "Les Misérables."

"Moi,
Poète trop longtemps près du trône allardé."

("I,
A poet too long near the throne delayed.")

Victor Hugo traced the title of "Hernani" in large letters resembling printed characters, separated from each other thus :

" H E R N A N I . "

The title of "Marion Delorme" is written in English, but on the first leaf of the manuscript we read, "*Un Duel sous Richelieu.*" This was the original title of the production, but was subsequently abandoned. Since that time M. Lockroy, senior, has written a drama bearing the discarded title, which has proved very successful. The manuscript of "Marion Delorme" has no binding ; that of "Roi s'Amuse," on the contrary, is magnificently encased in parchment. The latter is traced on large paper in blue letters, written even larger than that of "Hernani." On the title-page is this indorsement : "Begun June 3d, 1832 ; finished June 23rd." The first and fifth acts occupied the author but two days. At the end of the manuscript is a sketch in ink of a sinister-looking personage with an enormous mouth, his elbows resting on his knees, and wearing long pointed shoes. Underneath it is written, "The Last Buffoon reflecting over the Last King."

All his mss. were placed in the hands of the publishers, and from them certain volumes have been selected.

Victor Hugo has a habit of writing on the first piece of paper (no matter what) which comes to hand. Ernest Fouinet sent him some notes for "Les Orientals." On the very same sheet of paper the poet jotted down "Les Têtes du Sérail." The Marquis du Vidal de Montferrier, a cousin of Hugo, sent him invitations to his daughter's wedding. The poet availed himself of the blank spaces thereon to write verses. Parts of "Les Feuilles d'Automne" were written on dinner invitations, signed Antony or Émile Deschamps.

What curiously entertaining hours in the atmosphere of that glorious past covered by such *souvenirs* ! Every leaf is a golden memory ! I was like one strangely intoxicated, while turning over all these precious pages. It is gratifying to know that the literary effects of Victor Hugo are to be bequeathed entire to the National Library.

Victor Hugo once remarked :

“ Je suis né à temps pour ma gloire ; je suis à cheval sur deux siècles. ” *

“ When I was a Peer of France,” he added, “ and sitting on the Left, with Montalembert, Wagram, Boisson, and D’Alton Shée, I had at my right hand a soldier who was a Marshal of France two years after my birth, and who, when I arrived at the Luxembourg, said to me, ‘ Young man, you are too late :’ it was Marshal Soult in 1804 ! at my left was a man who had sat in judgment on Louis XVI., nine years before my birth ! it was Pontécoulant ; opposite me was the defender of Beaumarchais in the Goezman trial, twenty-five years before I was born ! the latter was the Chancellor Pasquier.”

With a certain exhibition of *coquetterie*, Victor Hugo recalls the fact that he has taken part in the usages of a vanishing state of society, and it is deeply interesting to hear him discourse on his mother’s time, which contested the reports of Imperial victories even while his father was shedding his blood in the thickest of the fray. The interest is heightened by astonishment, as he presents us with the very names of those who shrugged their shoulders at the news of Austerlitz, and mockingly said, “ Peuh ! I know all the details. The viscountess has

* “ I was born in time for my glory ; I am bestriding two centuries.”

received a letter. Austerlitz ? It is nothing—an anecdote—an affair of the vanguard !”

At some future day the brief sayings of Victor Hugo will certainly be published, and cannot fail of taking rank beside the “Conversations of Goethe.” Among the younger writers, MM. Rivet, Talmeyr, and Barbou have already successfully inaugurated the project ; but as yet, of course, the undertaking is merely outlined.

I know of no one in this age, when men’s speech bears so little resemblance to their writings, who is so individually identified with his discourse and his works as Victor Hugo. In speaking, as in writing, he makes use of the same words which are peculiar to him alone—figures of expression, wonderfully original, and forcible in the highest degree. I remember hearing him one evening, as he was affirming the life eternal, declare in impassioned language :

“ Yes, I feel it within me—I know it to be a verity ! That which I shall speak later, I now but stammer imperfectly. *There* I shall continue to advance sublimely ! *Je suis le têtard d’un archange !*” *

Imagine any other of our contemporaries giving utterance to such an expression ! I defy you to find *one* !

The brief sayings of Victor Hugo—what a book of books they would indeed furnish ! How wonderful a compilation of the poet’s erudition (which, by the way, has been disputed by certain prejudiced opponents), and soaring thoughts, born of the instant, might not such a work, in proper hands, be made !

“ I read little else now,” he said to me one evening, “ but odd, old books. One characteristic book of a modern writer is sufficient for me to judge of his genius,

* “ I am the tadpole of an archangel.”

as one bone sufficed for Cuvier to reconstruct a mastodon."

This confession of faith challenges reflection. All the surprising erudition of Victor Hugo in "L'Homme qui Rit," in "L'Ane," is explained as the divination with which he reads the thoughts of men and the mysteries of nature, both of which are as clear to him as an open book.

Of a man whom he loves, Victor Hugo will more willingly say, "He is good," rather than, "He is great." "I place goodness," he has remarked, "before everything else." But after all, this patriarchal mildness is not entirely free from occasional sarcasm; and often his *jeu-de-mots* carry more weight than serious assertion. Of M. Thiers he said, "This is not the man of the century; he is the man of the minute!"

An entire volume would be necessary to fittingly record the personal characteristics of Victor Hugo, in all the intimacies of his private life and associations. What joyous gladness, what ennobling emotions, what thrilling recollections of a glorious past, do we not owe to Victor Hugo! So long as he shall be permitted to remain with us, genius will ever reign over France!

At times he proudly lifts his head in anticipation of future works he may yet achieve, but always adding, "*Deo volente.*" Then, with a smile which is peculiarly his own, he adds submissively, "But it is perhaps time to release my century."

"*Release!*" He has filled it, he has enriched it, he has moved it to tears and elevated it in song; he has made it vital—this century renowned for science, literature, art, material progress, and political advancement—and endowed it with the spirit of his own immortal genius!

FERDINAND DE LESSEPS.

[FERDINAND, VICOMTE DE LESSEPS, was born at Versailles November 19th, 1805. Having completed his education he became attached to the French Consulate at Lisbon in 1825, and in 1828 to the Consulate-General at Tunis. After the taking of Algiers he was charged with securing the submission of the Bey of Constantine. In 1831 he was sent to Egypt, this time as Consul. He obtained from Ibrahim Pasha, during the occupation of Syria by the latter, protection for the Christians, and did much toward re-establishing peace between Mehemet Ali and the Sultan. He was Consul at Malaga in 1839, and at Barcelona in 1842. During the bombardment of the latter city he rendered important services to the sufferers of all nations, frequently exposing his own life, during the fighting, to save the lives of others. For his personal heroism on this occasion he received many and deserved testimonials. On his return to Paris he was sent to Rome, charged with the delicate task of restoring order in the Papal Dominions, and preventing liberal excesses from interfering with the establishment of a regular government. His instructions, it is asserted, were far from explicit ; but the liberalism he evinced in stipulating that the Roman people should be free to choose their own form of government was not agreeable to the authorities at home, and he was recalled. In October, 1854, he went to Egypt by invitation of the new Viceroy, Saïd Pasha. While there he thoroughly examined the project of a canal across the Isthmus of Suez, and drew up a memorial on the subject, entitled, " Percement de l'Isthme de Suez, Exposé et Documents Officiel," giving full details of the enterprise. The determined opposition he was forced to encounter on the part of England, and the numerous difficulties purposely put in his way by the Palmerston Ministry, are fully recounted in the following

biographical sketch. The completed canal was finally and formally opened November 17th, 1869. Since the completion of this great work M. de Lesseps has suggested the conversion of the Sahara into an inland sea, and the cutting of a ship-canal across the Isthmus of Corinth, to connect the gulfs of Lepanto and Ægina. In 1874 he proposed a central Asian railway to connect directly the south of Europe and India. In 1879 his attention was directed to a proposed interoceanic canal across the Isthmus of Panama, since which time operations have been there commenced and are still going on—with what result the future will demonstrate.]

IN August, 1879, the course of public addresses delivered throughout France by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps, on the feasibility of constructing an interoceanic canal across the Isthmus of Panama, was concluded at Bayonne.

It is related that, according to the traditions of his family, a former Lesseps had been, about the year 1733, Councillor and Treasurer of Bayonne. He presided over its first Chamber of Commerce, which to-day tenders a banquet to his distinguished descendant. The family at that epoch was already centenarian. In 1572 Bertrand Lesseps, captain of the watch at the Louvre, aided in the flight of Henry of Navarre.

Toward the year 1771, Dominique Lesseps received from Louis XV. his patent of nobility. Barthélemy de Lesseps, after being tossed about by the Revolution and the Empire from Kamtschatka to Constantinople, accepted from the Restoration the post of Consul at Lisbon, which he occupied until 1832.

In the same year, while Ferdinand de Lesseps, then twenty-seven years of age, was beginning to attract public attention at Alexandria (in that Egypt already prepared to become a familiar domain for him!), his father, Mathieu de Lesseps, *chargé d'affaires* at Tunis,

died in Africa—a land that should forever bear witness to the world of the glorious achievement of his son.

Born at Versailles, the 10th of November, 1805, the child Ferdinand secures early recognition at the Lycée of Henry IV., terminates his studies, becomes attached to the Consulate at Lisbon, passes from the consular service as pupil to the Consulate-General of Tunis, and from thence, in the following year, to a similar post at Alexandria.

Thenceforth he adapts himself to Oriental customs, to the life and manners of the East, to the character and endowments of those grave men for whom a gesture is more than a word, and an action more than a gesture.

In 1835 the pest rages at Alexandria; the people emigrate *en masse*; but the French resident remains at his post, transforms his consulate into a hospital, saves many lives, himself escapes the scourge, and wins the golden opinion of nations. M. Thiers, then First Minister of the Citizen King, rewards him with a decoration; the “European colony” at Alexandria bestow upon him their choicest honors; the Arabs worship him, and the world applauds his heroism!

For seven years he remains in Egypt; marries Mlle. Delamalle, who becomes the mother of his two eldest sons, Charles and Victor de Lesseps; occupies at Malaga (in his mother’s native country) his position as Consul; in 1842 is transferred to Barcelona, at a time when the city is threatened with bombardment by the troops of Espartero. In his official capacity he orders the French flag to be hoisted on the consulate building, and affords shelter to all who there seek refuge. Again the eyes of Europe are upon him; the foreign residents of Barcelona vote him a commemorative medal; the municipality places his bust in the Hôtel de Ville; Marseilles sends

him an address. These are among the first of his many honors. Fortune will have occasion to say of him at the end of his long and brilliant career :

“ Je t'en avais comblé, je t'en veux accabler.”*

Suspected by the rulers of 1848, he is summoned to Paris, but immediately sent back to Spain by Lamartine, who commissions him Minister to Madrid. His first official relations with the Bonapartes are far from being agreeable. It is a Bonaparte† who supplants him in Spain, and on his return Louis Napoleon, the Prince-President, endeavors to make him an object of ridicule. The Roman uprising takes place, and M. de Lesseps is dispatched to Italy, charged with a mission of inspection of the policy of the 7th of May, inviting the Government to take necessary measures lest our arms might be directed against the Austrian invasion, and not against Roman independence.

[The celebrated letter addressed by the President of the French Republic to General Oudinot, and confided to Envoy de Lesseps, was precisely to the contrary.]

Sincerely devoted to the cause of liberty, a most efficient diplomatic agent, having already displayed remarkable capacity in the performance of duties intrusted to his discretion, M. de Lesseps repairs to Rome, desirous of conforming in the strictest manner possible to the decisions of the National Assembly and to the directions of his superiors. The account, verified by official documents, of this most extraordinary episode is found in a pamphlet, published by the special envoy on his return,

* “ I have loaded you with favors; I wish to overwhelm you with them.”

† Napoleon Joseph.

addressed to the Council of State, and entitled, "Ma Mission à Rome en 1849."

From the moment of his arrival at Rome, M. de Lesseps notes that General Oudinot, commander of the French expedition, is obeying instructions entirely the reverse of his own, and contrary to the expressed policy of the National Assembly. Undoubtedly the latter is aiming at the extinction of Roman liberty and the reinstatement of the Pope!

Meantime the most cordial relations are maintained between the French Plenipotentiary and the Roman Triumvirate. Our representative recognizes the justice of the cause defended by Mazzini, the great Italian patriot, who appreciates the loyal efforts of the equally famous Frenchman.

How sadly eloquent is this grand ultimatum of the Triumvirs: "The Romans have the right to find in France fraternity and support; but their demand for, and acceptance of, it would be interpreted by Europe as a signal of distress. Such a position would be unbecoming a proud and valorous people. *There is no dishonor in knowing how to die!*"

But the National has been replaced by the Constituent Assembly in France. M. de Lesseps has vainly made the telegraph to groan under the multiplicity of his dispatches, and is yet without final instructions from the Janus-faced Government that has betrayed him. Nevertheless he continues his negotiations, little doubting his acts will find ample justification from the powers that be. He succeeds in embodying a project of honorable stipulation, agreed to by the Triumvirs, and acceptable to our own soldiery. The *Etat-Major* assemble to listen to the promulgation. The Plenipotentiary is interrupted "by the insolent disapproval and menacing

gestures" of General Oudinot. M. de Lesseps's official character suffers him only to preserve a demeanor of unruffled dignity.

Finally, on the 29th of May, an answer is received from Paris, *notifying him of his recall!*

His laudable efforts are useless; Oudinot remains master of the situation; Rome is bombarded, and our victory completes our *shame!*

Sacrificed to the culpable designs of the future Emperor, the honorable diplomatist, striving to justify his acts before the Council of State, only secures his virtual dismissal from the service. Twenty years later he gives public expression of his discomfiture, for the first and only time, in these words:

"Events have demonstrated that the policy (the reverse of which I was instructed to follow) has not been a felicitous one for our own country."

We know that M. de Lesseps voted against the Empire, and deeply regretted its accession to power!

With the timely catastrophe which put an end to his official career in France, is also connected a prior event. One of his frequent journeys to Egypt had been delayed by quarantine at Alexandria. He had sent ashore to his colleague at the Consulate for some reading matter, with which to while away the tedious hours of waiting. Among other documents was forwarded the report of Lepère, the engineer, relative to the adoption of some means of transportation across the Isthmus of Suez. Thus, having his attention called in that direction, he carefully studied the project, and, during his subsequent prolonged sojourn in Egypt, gave to the consideration of the idea much of his time and thought. Though often put aside, it obstinately and tenaciously recurred to him. That chance delay at the quarantine station of Alex-

andria proved to be a fortunate mishap. The rupture of his official life in 1849 afforded him an opportunity of resuming his study of the subject. Four years of quiet meditation in the province of Berri, where he occupied himself in agricultural pursuits, solved for him his "Eastern Question," and fully developed his "Egyptian Idea."

To cut the Suez Canal—what an undertaking! Where was the man to whom a sufficiency of life for the accomplishment of this gigantic work could rationally be promised?

When Abbas Pasha died,* and the personal friend of his youth, Mahomed Saïd, grandson of Mehemet Ali, was proclaimed Viceroy of Egypt, Ferdinand de Lesseps lost no time in embarking for Alexandria to offer him his congratulations. It might almost be said that he carried the Suez Canal in his travelling satchel; and on approaching the ancient shores of the Ptolemies, provided the time was conducive to revery, it may have surprised him that the *paquebot* did not directly enter the wondrous passage, already grown to seeming realization in his mind's eye. His confidence in the undertaking was no less unshaken then than when, fifteen years later, it became an accomplished fact. At heart a sceptic, he was, at the same time, too diplomatic not to make the most of beliefs, however diverse; and although he found consolation and encouragement in the Bible, it must not for a moment be supposed that he allowed the Koran to remain in the background, for upon that, too, he seems to have depended for certain material comfort—and aid, which was of more importance to his enterprise just then. This man of action, pensive at times, but earnest always, is occasionally sub-

* In 1854.

ject to forebodings which may momentarily fret without deterring him from his fixed purpose. He who has contemplated the dim mysteries of the desert, cannot be blind to the signs of the heavens ! Who speaks in the midst of these vast solitudes—God ? Allah ? or Vishnu ?

The new Viceroy accorded M. de Lesseps a distinguished and cordial welcome, as was natural under the circumstances, and subsequently conducted him to his camp on Lake Maréotis, where the former (and present) diplomat awaited the first favorable opportunity for unfolding his project.

On the morning of the 15th of November, 1854, he saw a magnificent rainbow, the two extremities of which dipped from east to west. He interpreted the sign as indicative of an alliance between the Orient and the Occident—the day specially set apart for the initiation of his cherished idea.

And on that day he spoke, and the Viceroy answered, "*I accept your plan ; you may rely upon me !*"

On the 31st of December following, it is a meteor which marks the first day's exploration through the desert ; one year later, when the preparatory inspection is happily terminated, the symbol of alliance again appears, clasping two worlds in its resplendent bow of promise. Superstition aside, one can hardly resist the poetic inspiration of such phenomena.

The history of the Suez Canal will occupy a prominent place among the most striking events in the first part and second half of the present century. The Crimean War, the Treaty of Villafranca, the disaster of 1870, operate more or less directly upon its existence. And is it not the principal object of the warlike complications of 1882-83 ?

That which brought this stupendous work to its

triumphant conclusion ; that which has stamped beyond obliteration the glory of its founder ; that which, even in the eyes of those for whom the details of the work possess no material interest, commands the greatest admiration, is the indomitable will of Ferdinand de Lesseps ! Add to this the ubiquitous faculty of this wonderful man. He starts out for Constantinople or Egypt on the instant, carrying with him a small hand-satchel—in sooth, such a personage as some of our American friends might term a “carpet-bagger.” From 1854 to 1858 he covers, per year, ten thousand miles more than the circumference of the globe. It is true one can sleep with comparative security on the railway train ; and in solitude the overburdened mind becomes strengthened and refreshed. During the entire period prior to the commencement of actual operations he appeared successively in Cairo, Constantinople, Paris, London, Vienna, and Odessa, leaving a luminous track of scientific and commercial enlightenment for all Europe to wonder and speculate over.

He begins the “agitation for Suez.” Everywhere he discourses freely and at ease, having the practical plans and never-lying figures before him. Nothing daunts or even surprises him. He is “a plain, blunt man who speaks right on what he himself doth know ;” and his own confidence inspires a similar sentiment in the minds of others. That he may “jostle the syntax” at times is natural, for he talks as rapidly as he acts. He delivers everywhere a speech, characteristically French from its simplicity and vigor. Everywhere he exhibits his plans and the result of his attendant studies. Yet he is not a man of unalterable opinions. He is ever ready to adopt the opinions of others, whenever and wherever logical deductions show them to be superior to his own. He

follows a rule of conduct which has frequently been condemned as dangerous by the absolute theorist. So much the better ! As he wishes the works he has accomplished to be recognized, he is not slow of recognition regarding the works of others.

The act of concession of Mohamed-Saïd to his "esteemed friend, Ferdinand de Lesseps," is dated the 30th of November, 1854. Through prudence the acquiescence of the Porte must also be obtained. Had not England been forewarned since 1852 ? Was it not diplomacy on the part of Great Britain to await the imminent execution of the project before arousing the Sultan ? M. de Lesseps is provided with a *vizirielle* letter, addressed to the Viceroy, permitting him to begin actual operation on the canal ? He calls together, at his office in Paris, a scientific International Commission, and conducts it to Egypt, where it is received by the Viceroy as a sort of caravan of sovereigns ; invites its special investigation ; insists upon the direct track, without locks, by way of the Bitter Lakes—the Viceroy providing for all these expenses with half a million taken from his private coffers !

England has already begun its remonstrances at Cairo and Constantinople, where Lord Stratford de Radcliffe most vigorously represents Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. The reasoning of the British Minister and his partisans is almost comical. "The canal is impossible," they say, "but it is necessary to prevent its construction at all hazards, as its existence would prove a disaster to England !" And then, again, it was "only an imaginary undertaking, you know !" Thus Premier Palmerston wholly resists an entire party in England, and upon what argument ? *The hindrance of an impossibility !* Is it surprising that M. de Lesseps sometimes scoffs at the

“wooden heads of isolated but stubborn politicians” ? Still another not unimproved opportunity for the founder of the canal to irritate a traditional enemy, whose greed far exceeds its power, powerful as it may be. The House of Commons is agitated. Debates are carried on by Lord Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone, and Lord John Russell. The English engineer Stephenson declares that the project “can only end in ruin ;” Palmerston says it is “the greatest piece of dupery ever practised on human credulity,” and, a little later, adds, “It is a proposition which may be classed with numerous other cheats which, from time to time, are held out to entrap the unwary.” Far-sighted statesmanship, this ! Disraeli reiterates his previous criticisms from the standpoint of the rue de Jerusalem, and Gladstone thunders his resonant “verbosity” through the Liberal amphitheatre. It would be well for the present Premier of England to recall the words he uttered when he begged the House of Commons “to put an end, by arbitrary interference, to a policy which would plunge England into strife with the world, with no other prospect than that of being worsted in the end !”

From George Stephenson, M. de Lesseps demands prompt satisfaction for the language he had employed. To the Count de C——, who professes to consider the Canal Company as “a bankrupt concern,” and the French Government “a bolsterer of fraudulent speculation,” he sends a challenge, confided to General Morris and Admiral Jurien de la Gravière. He writes to them from Malta : “Arrange the duel—I will be on hand.” M. de Lesseps is still a young man, and his long-enduring patience has become exhausted by the eternal calumnies of the English !

The Government of Palmerston continues to harass the

Porte, now ready to issue the firman, ratifying the canal concession. Its "impossible" construction might serve France as a military avenue between Europe and India. As for the Emperor Napoleon, having received the reports of his agents, he demanded still further notes from M. de Lesseps. The ex-Plenipotentiary of 1849 has not ventilated his personal grievances, and the mock Cæsar is a personage who, from his position alone, it is necessary to reckon in the political combination. Yes, the Emperor must be converted to Lessepsism ! and, besides, M. de Lesseps had a strong supporter at the Tuileries in his cousin, the Empress.* It is to her, in this crisis of events, that a note is dispatched ; otherwise the sovereign could not be approached. Napoleon III. answers, " Be strong ; you will be upheld." Strength ! How assume it in a tangible shape in the face of contending powers ? By the representation of money ?—the power to say, " I represent so many millions of your national wealth ? How long, therefore, will you permit egotistical England to obstruct the channel of our labor and our capital ?" But to risk the subscription before obtaining the necessary firman of the Porte ! Here, again, the English ambassador held the pen of the Sultan !

Thus, after four years of diplomacy, delaying and vexatious, the pear is at last ripe, the hand is stretched forth, it closes over it, and directly there *is* the right to speak in the name of two hundred millions of francs, one hundred and seven millions of which are subscribed by the French people !

The financial success of the enterprise exasperates the cupidity of the Britishers. The Khedive is menaced

* The Empress Eugenie, née Countess de Montijo, was the granddaughter of Madame Kirkpatrick, sister of Madame Catherine de Grevigné de la Housse, mother of Ferdinand de Lesseps.

with deposition. Then the grantee declares to the Emperor that, as a private citizen, he can no longer struggle against the machinations of a powerful Government. If France refused to put an end to the illegitimate interference of English policy, the project must necessarily fail.

Monsieur Bull, on learning that the stockholders were ready to proceed with the organization of the company, persuades the Sultan to delegate Mouktar Bey, who is sent to Egypt with an order, suspending all operations on the canal for a period of fourteen days. M. Sabatier, the French Consul, acquiesces in the order of the Porte, and threatens the laborers, already assembled, with unpleasant consequences if one shovelful of earth is stirred. M. de Lesseps is at Chesnaie, in Berri. The long-looked-for opportunity has arrived at last. The Suez Canal is no longer a project only—it is a question to be adjudicated by the august tribunal of combined Europe.

The treaty of Villafranca, concluded the 11th of July, 1859, relieves the Emperor's mind from immediate impending conflicts, and provides the necessary leisure for thinking of Suez. The French ambassador at the Porte was promptly instructed to demand the authorization of the Sultan. The members of the company's council are allowed to petition the "Sick Man." An audience with Napoleon III. is held at Saint Cloud, on Sunday, 23d of October, 1859.

"How is it, Monsieur de Lesseps," said the Emperor, "that so great a part of the world is against you?"

"Sire, it is thought that your Majesty is not with me."

"*Eh bien, soyez tranquille* (twisting the ends of his mustache between his fingers), you may rely upon my support and protection. I have given orders to my

Minister of Foreign Affairs that your rights and your operations *must be maintained!*"

In private he inquired of M. de Lesseps :

"What is the first step you would suggest?"

"A change in the Consulate-General in Egypt."

"Easily done—*say so to Waleski.*"*

Operations are forthwith resumed at Suez. The diplomatist instantly embarks for Constantinople, whither the news of his success has preceded him. Lord Palmerston had scoffed at the *rigole* of M. de Lesseps. "You will shortly be required to dig another 'trench' for the purpose of carrying away the flow of Anglo-Turkish tears," remarked the French ambassador, M. Thouvenel.

The first general assembly of the stockholders, on the 15th of May, 1860, approves the conduct of M. de Lesseps, and greatly strengthens it by a vote of absolute confidence. The British press resents this second triumph, and applies to him such generous (!) epithets as "Monte Cristo," "charlatan," and "adventurer."

On the 18th of November, 1862, the Mediterranean is joined to Lake Timsah, and pours its waters into the Red Sea. Will Palmerston succeed in disuniting them now? Two months later, Mahomed Saïd dies, and is succeeded by Ismaïl Pasha, after whom is called "Ismaïlia," the present commercial city. But here another crisis arises: the works languish, are interrupted, in fact. The affairs of the country have been largely directed by a minister of the Sultan in the interest of England, and influenced to a greater or less degree by a French statesman†—so called. The latter is simply

* Minister of Foreign Affairs.

† M. le Duc de Morny.

endeavoring to dispossess the company at a moment when it exhibited assured indications of prosperity. To this "statesman" M. de Lesseps said :

"Monsieur le Duc, you are the very last person to entangle yourself in our affairs and serve as arbitrator. It is reported that the adversaries of the canal count upon your intervention in order to dispossess us ; it is also reported that considerable sums of money have been given, or at least promised, and your own name has been used as a shield for Nubar Pasha."

It is alleged that certain other perilous expressions passed between M. de Lesseps and the favorite of the Tuileries.

In the meanwhile it is M. de Morny himself who is dispossessed of the arbitration, the Emperor taking the charge into his own hands. M. de Lesseps is accorded an audience by both the Emperor and Empress. On the 11th of February a banquet of sixteen hundred participants is given by Prince Napoleon, who, in addressing his guests, expatiated on the masters of learning and the masters of deeds.

The result of the arbitration undertaken by the Emperor is announced at Fontainebleau, on the 6th of July, 1864. It is decided that a sum of eighty-four millions shall be paid by the Egyptian Government to the Suez Canal Company as indemnity : First, for the annulment of the contract by which the Viceroy had agreed to furnish the disqualified contingents ; second, for the retrocession of the arable lands of the Ouady ; and third, the surrender of the property of the fresh-water canal.

The Porte, Nubar Pasha and his instigators are still wrangling over the terms of the arbitration, but the end of uncertainty is reached at last. Never again can the

Porte intermeddle in order to delay or hinder the future success of the great work !

All Europe still remembers the glorious day * fixed upon for the inauguration of M. de Lesseps's gigantic work. The Khedive of Egypt, the Empress of the French, the Emperor of Austria, and the Crown Prince of Prussia were among the more conspicuous assistants on that memorable occasion. Then it was that the whole civilized world united to honor the magnificent achievement of the President-Director !

His dream had proven true !—the great task was accomplished ! Ferdinand de Lesseps recommences his life from that date, for now he marries Mlle. Hélène Autard de Bragard, and founds a second family of De Lesseps, at present numbering eight children.†

The *auréole* of the triumpher did not eclipse the radiance of his countenance in the hour of victory. His personal appearance at that time remains as we have always remembered it. Is he a general ?—this æsthetically attired individual in closely fitting black frock-coat, his hat slightly to one side, a glove in his hand, walking with a firm tread, and displaying a decided military air ? He leaves the Institute, crosses the gardens of the Tuileries, and passes on to the rue Saint-Florentin, where he has a *salon* (a sort of miniature Egypt) in the very centre of Paris. One is surprised at finding the well-known features so little bronzed by the scorching African sun. His forehead is very white ; fine, silvery locks, worn somewhat long, tumble about his calm, confident countenance ; the eyebrows are still dark ; heavy lids overshadow his luminously sombre eyes with coal-

November 17th, 1869.

A late cable dispatch signals the birth of the ninth.

black pupils, not of flaming intensity, but heavily charged with a latent fire, and emitting flashes of the soul-power within ; the nose, somewhat thick, but well shaped, descends to the drooping, gray mustache, which partially conceals the resolute firmness of the mouth ; a square chin, admirably terminating the well-poised and perfectly proportioned head—such was the personal appearance of M. de Lesseps twelve years ago, and such it remains to-day.

A decade later, in prosecution of a work * similar to that accomplished in Egypt, he gave four conferences in a single week—at Toulouse, Nantes, Lille, and Nancy. The ardor of his heart and brain is not in the least cooled by his eighty years of life and labor, and his bodily elasticity remains intact. Indeed, has he not added another proof of the latter fact by his recent campaign in Egypt ?

When one has shortened by three thousand miles the voyage from Europe to India, the distance is forgotten. At Panama, in the not distant future, the great leveller of mountains and uniter of seas may be able to say to a friend at parting :

“Venez donc un de ces jours déjeuner avec moi rue Saint-Florentin.”†

Constant activity requires strength to maintain it. In giving riding lessons to his sons (for M. de Lesseps retains all his old fondness for equestrian exercises), he is not unmindful of his own physical welfare. His habits have always been abstemious. Despite his long sojourn in the Orient, he is guiltless of every custom of the *café*, except as regards his after-dinner cigar. The

* The Panama Canal.

† “Come over one of these days and breakfast with me in the rue Saint-Florentin.”

councils of Suez, of Panama, and of the Institute, together with the vast amount of official business he is called upon to transact, absorb his waking moments. Work and domestic duties suffice to occupy a life which has possessed for him the rarest attractions.

In November, 1869, the diplomatic and scientific conqueror whom Europe acclaims has not yet exhausted the sum of his achievements. In 1870 he is called to London. Our neighbors across the Channel celebrate the consummation of the defeat of their previous policy as though it had been their own victory instead ! M. de Lesseps receives the gold medal of Prince Albert and the Grand Cross of the Star of India ; he is formally welcomed at Guildhall, where the Lord Mayor presents him with the freedom of the city of London in the following words : “ We to-day inscribe your name in our Book of Rights, together with those of Richard Cobden and George Peabody, men whose acts, like your own, were of pacific character and purity.”

In 1879 somebody addresses a letter to the Procureur of the Republic, demanding the citation of M. de Lesseps before the Tribunal for sending out a subscription of eight hundred thousand francs for the Inter-oceanic Canal ! The President read the communication to the end, remarking as he finished it : “ Unhappily the complaint does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal. The Grand Ribbon of the Legion of Honor is a subject for the Senate only. Ah ! if the Senate only *would* take the matter in hand, what a reclamation it would be for Panama !”

The later project of the Isthmus of Panama came to M. de Lesseps like an adopted child. He neither dreamed of nor planned it himself : *it was submitted to him !* He examined, reviewed, and corrected it, stipu-

lating, before everything else, the avoidance of the lock-system proposed. His journey to America has shown him to be as young at seventy-three as at fifty. He proposes raising eight hundred million francs by casting into one scale of the balance the weight of a single name—his own ! He does not succeed entirely, but, like a wise man, he displays no bitterness of feeling, and, tenacious as he may be, he will not strive against impossibilities. Tenacious, yes, for the execution of an adopted project, but equally pliable in his opinions as to the choice of means for its accomplishment. He has given his moral support, best advice, and the material assistance of the great name he bears to the success of the enterprise, and there is no reason for doubting a satisfactory conclusion.

So it is that the distinguished President of the Geographical Society of France transforms the geography of modern times ! Versailles has placed a commemorative *plaque* upon the house, wherein was born this “great Frenchman” who has belted the globe with his pacific acts !

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